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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you believe CUC when it says there will be no more power outages after Sept. 16?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

11 DAYS until Sept. 16, when Aggreko generators are to start working

INSIDE

Friendly Fire

U.S. troops on boats in the Tigris river mistakenly killed six Iraqis Wednesday.

WORLD...Page 28

Target

Christina Aguilera has become the latest musical act to release an album exclusively through one retailer.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 36

CUC says outages adversely affecting water quality

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The constant power outages is increasing the chance contaminants will be found in the water produced by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., officials from the CUC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said.

The pipes that pump the water are designed to be pressure-filled, but with the constant outages, the pipes are not fully pressured, allowing contaminated ground water to enter and fill the pipes, said Derek Chambers, an EPA advisor to

See CUC on Page 4

State of emergency extended

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has extended the state of disaster emergency for the Commonwealth, saying the utility's failure to offer reliable power service still poses a risk to the people's health and safety.

Fitial

RELATED NEWS

- CUC ahead of schedule in installing lines. **PAGE 5**
- Load shedding schedule. **PAGE 5**

Fitial in an executive order issued yesterday also suspended safety, environmental and other regulations that apply to the installation of Aggreko equipment, so the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. can turn the generators on as soon as possible.

The extension of the disaster emergency declaration will be effective for 31 days.

See STATE on Page 4

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Linemen from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s power division install power lines that will be connected to the new Aggreko generators in Lower Base yesterday afternoon.

229 garment workers to lose jobs

Labor revokes permits of 229 UIC workers

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Labor ordered yesterday the revocation of the work permits of 229 foreigners working at garment manufacturer United International Corp., effective Sept. 21 when UIC ceases operations.

See 229 on Page 4

$156M eyed for FY09 budget

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

IN BRIEF

- No budget passed yet for FY08
- Fiscal year ending on Sept. 30
- 25 days left in FY08

The Legislature and administration are now looking at a resource level of $156.7 million, a decrease of $1.7 million from the original revenue projection for the 2009 fiscal year.

The new estimate factors in the $1.7 million income from the Marianas Public Land Trust, which has been earmarked

See $156M on Page 4

Sablan, Salas resign from House committee. **PAGE 3**

Abramoff pleads for leniency before sentencing. **PAGE 8**

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Local

Meetings held to improve new labor law

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Officials and members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands listen to Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat, Labor director Barry Hirshbein, and volunteer consultant and Labor administrative hearing officer Deanne Siemer during a meeting on Public Law 15-108 at the Department of Labor's conference room yesterday morning.

Department of Labor officials started yesterday one of a series of meetings to obtain input from the community on what amendments they can propose to the controversial Public Law 15-108, or the new reform labor law.

Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat, Labor director Barry Hirshbein, and volunteer consultant and Labor administrative hearing officer Deanne Siemer met with officials and representatives of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands at Labor's conference room yesterday morning.

Kaipat, Hirshbein and Siemer were also set to meet with lawyers who represent foreign national workers yesterday afternoon. They will also meet with Bar Association members and representatives of various non-profit organizations of alien workers.

The main concerns raised by Chamber and HANMI participants yesterday were the employers' liability for workers who do not transfer and how Immigration is going to deal with those workers. Others also wanted to know, among other things, how to replace, transfer, or bring in workers.

Kaipat, the author of P.L. 15-108, told *Saipan Tribune* that the meeting with the Chamber and HANMI went "great."

Kaipat said the meeting was intended to get comments from the business community and other segments of the community about the implementation of P.L. 15-108.

The former lawmaker said that, before she left the Legislature, she had urged her colleagues not to amend the law just yet until Labor has had a chance to implement it and see what works and what doesn't.

She promised lawmakers that, after the law's implementation, Labor would then go up to the Legislature and make a full report on which changes they would like to see.

"That's why we invited the community to come in and give us their input, what [changes] they would like to see that we would like to consider," Kaipat said.

She said those who attended the meeting asked good questions. "It is important that we hear from everyone as to what they feel is working, what they would like to see proposed, get some ideas. That's the whole point—to improve upon Public Law 15-108, make it a better law."

She said she wants to make sure that proposed amendments are coordinated so that other different pieces work.

"We are trying to do it in an efficient, organized fashion," Kaipat stressed.

Hirshbein said the meetings will generate feedback from both the employer community and the worker community on how effective the labor law and current regulations are.

Hirshbein said the inputs are needed so they can propose to the Legislature amendments to the law and regulations over the next several months.

"We are inviting different groups to meet with us and tell us what changes they think we might be able to make to improve our operation, what things they like, what things we can improve, maybe expand some of our programs," he said.

"Anyone in the public is welcome to make comments about changes that they'd like to see made, or anything that they like about the way we are currently operating. And we will consider anyone's comments when we are working on amendments to the regulations," the Labor director said.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski said it is good that government agencies, especially Labor, is taking time to get input from businesses on labor laws.

Arenovski said the implementation of P.L. 15-108 has raised some concerns, so these meetings will allow employers a chance to raise these concerns with Labor.

The Chamber president said the group is happy that Labor has called upon businesses to get their input on certain concerns. "And that's what a professional group does. And we are really happy the Department of Labor is a professional group," Arenovski said.

BOE to examine transfer process

A school principal has expressed concern that students are having difficulty transferring from a private school to a public school without having to repeat their previous grade.

Calvary Christian Academy principal Scott Norman said he received a call from a student who was having trouble transferring to a public school. Norman said the student met the requirements necessary to complete the sophomore year at a private school, but because he did not meet the requirements set by the public school, he was going to be held back.

"I'm just concerned because this has never been a problem before," Norman said. "I've always assumed before...that the transfers have gone smoothly."

Private school students must complete 24 credits to graduate while public school students must complete 28 credits.

"We're looking more than anything else at student achievement," he said. "When you compare student achievement, there should be some way to transfer out of the private school to public school without any penalty."

Board of Education member Galvin Deleon Guerrero agreed with Norman that a board committee should look at this issue and make sure both public and private schools are focusing on standards and benchmarks. If that is done, the transition process should be fairly seamless, Guerrero added.

Twenty-two percent of CNMI students attend private schools. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

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Attorneys for Plaintiffs

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

CHRISTIONICA A. TAISACAN, CHRISTAL A. TAISACAN, BERNEIL A. TAISACAN, NEIL A. TAISACAN JR., JULVONNIE A. TAISACAN (Minor Children), NEIL TAISACAN AND BERTHA TAISACAN, VINCENT CABRERA, Plaintiffs, vs. WORLD CORPORATION, dba SAIPAN WORLD RESORT, and OK-JOO JUN LIZAMA, Defendants.	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-0384 SUMMONS**

TO: OK-JOO JUN LIZAMA,

YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the First Amended Complaint being filed against you, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within twenty (20) days after service of this Summons upon you, and deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the TORRES BROTHERS, LLC., Attorney at Law, whose address is stated above, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at the Superior Court for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, in the House of Justice - Guma Hustisia-Imwal Aweewe. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with the Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

BY ORDER OF THIS COURT.

Dated this 1st day of November 2007.

/s/ Clerk of Court
Superior Court of the Commonwealth
of the Northern Mariana Islands

Sablan, Salas resign from House committee

Rep. Tina Sablan on Wednesday resigned from the House committee that recommended the shelving of an immigration bill she had co-authored with several other lawmakers.

Sablan's resignation comes on the heels of a similar action by Rep. Edward Salas, who resigned from the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations, as well as the House leadership, last week.

Sablan and Salas are both sponsors of the House-rejected bill that proposed to grant improved immigration status for long-time guest workers.

In a letter to the Committee chair Rosemond Santos, Sablan decried not being given an opportunity to review the committee report, which urged the House of Representatives to shelve her bill, and which the House adopted on Aug. 22, 2008.

Sablan also criticized the committee for the two-page report, suggesting it was too simple to do justice to the legislation and the comments received about it.

"I am most disturbed… that a two-page committee report, which finds a piece of legislation reasonable, potentially beneficial, controversial, and moot, without fully explaining why, and which glosses over numerous testimonies received over three public hearings and a six-week comment period, can be deemed acceptable and sufficient by a majority of the committee members and a majority of the House," she said.

"I find these and other JGO committee practices to be improper and irreconcilable with my own views of what responsible lawmaking should entail. I therefore feel that my resignation as a member of the committee is in order," she added.

Reached by telephone yesterday afternoon, Santos said she will defer comment until she has read Sablan's letter. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

Munson grants Villagomez motion to extend deadline

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson has granted Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez's request to grant him another extension in the deadline to file pre-trial motions.

Munson ordered Villagomez to file the pre-trial motions no later than 3:30pm on Sept. 22, 2008.

It was the second time the judge granted the lieutenant governor's request for deadline extension. The U.S. Attorney's Office did not object to both requests.

Villagomez, through lawyer Joey P. San Nicolas, made the latest request due to additional documents to be provided him by the U.S. government.

San Nicolas, in Villagomez's second motion, underscored the need for another deadline considering that the U.S. government will provide additional discovery to them after the Sept. 8 deadline.

San Nicolas said assistant U.S. attorney Eric O'Malley had informed him that additional discovery would be provided in a week and a half and that a written response will be provided at that later date.

The original deadline was Aug. 25, 2008. On Aug. 21, Munson extended the deadline to Sept. 8 after Villagomez's counsel and O'Malley entered a stipulation to extend the deadline.

In Villagomez's first request for extension, San Nicolas stated that the discovery received thus far is voluminous and requires adequate time to review to prepare pre-trial motions in this case.

Villagomez, James Santos, his wife Joaquina Villagomez Santos, and former Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Anthony Guerrero were indicted on charges of conspiring to bilk CUC out of thousands of dollars through deals involving needless chemical purchases for CUC.

Villagomez and the Santos couple pleaded not guilty. Guerrero signed a plea agreement and entered a guilty plea.

Despite mounting calls either for his resignation or leave of absence, its "business as usual" for Villagomez.

James Santos had already resigned his post. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

CPA study calls for 'management stability'

A soon to be finalized study ordered by the Commonwealth Ports Authority is citing a need for the agency to fill key vacancies, acting director Lee Cabrera said in an interview Thursday.

CPA recently contracted with a private consulting firm to conduct the study, which examines rates at the local airport. The study is now in its final draft form and will soon be released, Cabrera said.

Among the key findings of the study is a recommendation that CPA's board begin meeting once again—which it did this week—and for the agency to fill scores of staff and management level vacancies that are limiting its ability to operate, he added.

For example, CPA currently lacks a staff attorney, a staff engineer, an airport manager and will soon need a port manager, Cabrera said.

However, Cabrera declined to release information on the outcome of the study, which was intended to evaluate shipping rates and fees at the local airport. That aspect of it, he added, will likely be addressed in a board meeting Friday.

The study comes as a similar one for the CNMI's seaports is soon to begin. Cabrera said consultants will be on hand at the local port next week to begin evaluating potential rate changes there.

Thursday marked Cabrera's last full day as CPA's director. He plans to take on a position with the Transportation Security Administration after an official director is appointed Friday, he said. ***(Stefan Sebastian)***

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Fitial renominates Perry Inos as SC judge

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has resubmitted his nomination of attorney Perry Inos as a Superior Court judge.

"I am confident that Mr. Inos is well qualified and will be a valued asset to the Commonwealth Judiciary," Fitial said in a letter to Senate President Pete P. Reyes.

The Senate now has a fresh 90 days to act on Inos' reappointment. If confirmed, Inos will serve a six-year term.

Fitial first named Inos in June 2008 as his pick to replace retired Judge Juan T. Lizama. But last month, the governor withdrew the nomination for unspecified reasons. At the time, the Senate Committees on Fiscal Affairs, and Executive Appointments and Government Investigations were poised to issue a report urging the Upper House to defer action on Inos' appointment.

The draft report said the government could save money from leaving the judicial seat. It added that the Superior Court had reported a declining number of cases. Thus, a temporary lack of a fifth judge would have little impact on the caseload of the other judges.

The CNMI Constitution requires the Superior Court to have five judges.

At present, there are four judges in the Superior Court. Each associate judge currently earns a base yearly salary of $120,000. This number does not include retirement contributions.

Inos has been in private practice since 1997. Before that, he worked as a teacher at Rota High School, student coordinator at the Rota campus of the Northern Marianas College, assistant attorney general for the Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division, and associate attorney at the law office of now Supreme Court Justice John A. Manglona. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

Group to host mock delegate election

The Coalition for Recognition, Equality and Advancement of American Ethnic Minorities, CREAM, will be spearheading a mock election on Sept. 13, 2008 to determine who among the candidates for the U.S. Delegate post will be supported by the group.

The officers and members of the group agreed to hold the mock election at their meeting Saturday, Aug. 30, at the Alanars Compound in San Antonio.

After the mock election, the coalition will invite the top four candidates to speak in a forum so they could hear firsthand from the front runners their campaign platforms and how they plan to represent and help the CNMI tackle its many problems such as power situation, lack of water, labor and immigration issues for both locals and long-time contract workers, immigration status, immediate relatives who will lose their local immigration status and many other concerns that only the U.S. Congress could resolve.

The voting criteria is not only limited to U.S. citizen ethnic voters. Eligible U.S. citizen voters can also participate so they can voice their opinion through the ballot.

Everyone who is eligible to vote will be given a ballot and allowed to cast their votes, provided that the potential voter is 18 years of age, a U.S. citizen and a registered voter. Several designated polling places will be located around Saipan. Officers of the coalition will be going around to provide ballots for people to vote.

The results of the mock election will be published in the local papers for the people to know the sentiment of concerned citizens of the CNMI.

For more information regarding this exercise, contact the following: Gus Loste, 483-3138; Emi Pamintuan, 483-0727; Willie Wagan, 288-4113, and Ed Caranzo, 287-8476.

The next meeting of the CREAM is on Saturday, 5pm at Alanars Compound. ***(PR)***

STATE

From Page 1

"Everybody knows the situation at CUC, so this should be no surprise," said press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr.

Last month, Fitial declared the CNMI under a state of disaster emergency, saying Saipan's main power plant could explode at any time and possibly "maim or kill" power plant workers. He also suspended CUC procurement regulations and waived the pre-review by the Public Utilities Commission of CUC's power supply contracts.

In yesterday's order, the governor said a catastrophic failure is still possible. He added that the power situation has worsened over the past month. All but one engine has crashed, with no immediate prospect for repair.

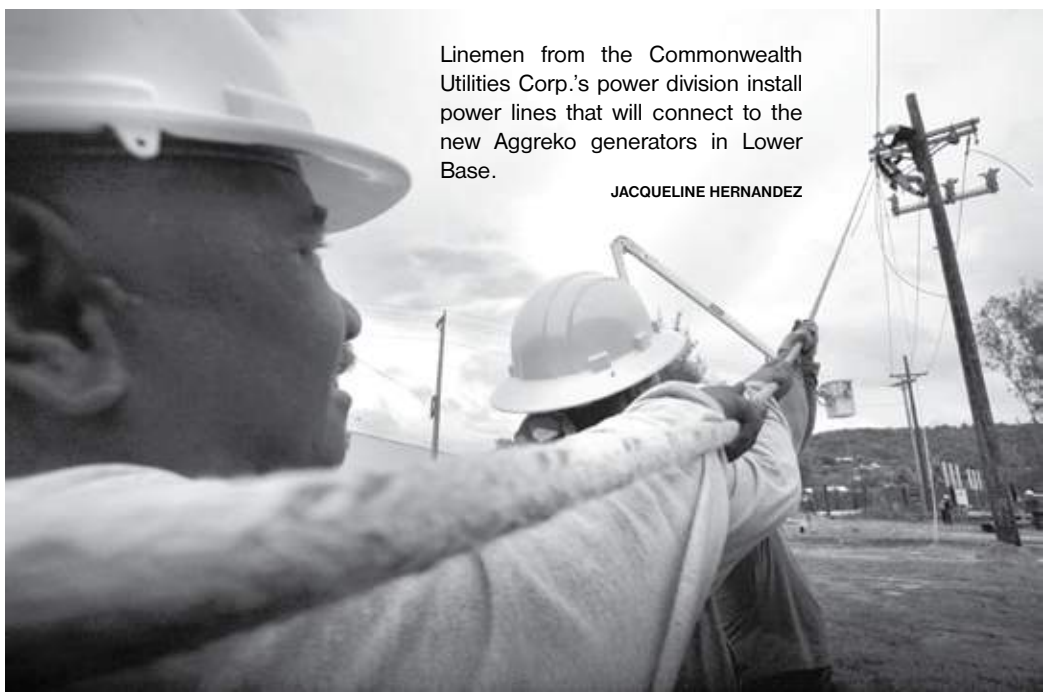
Aggreko, a contractor hired by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., has begun to deliver temporary generators, but unforeseen technical issues have arisen regarding their installation. Also, there are regulatory permits that must be secured before the equipment can be put to use.

Fitial said CUC intends to comply with environmental and land use regulations, but fears that the lack of permits or the permitting process would delay the deployment of the engines. To remove this hurdle, Fitial suspended any permit requirements that CUC says will interfere with the immediate operation of the Aggreko generators. But CUC must submit a compliance plan to the governor within 30 days.

"By today's disaster emergency declaration, I intend to enable CUC…to implement the temporary power contract which it signed. The purpose is to make the electric system as reliable as practicable, as soon as practicable, during the period of repair of CUC's generators," Fitial said.

CUC hopes to get the Aggreko engines running by next Friday, Sept. 12. The 15 additional megawatts from the Aggreko generators, added to the 24 to 30 megawatts CUC is expected to produce, will give the island 39 to 45 megawatts on a daily basis.

Approximately 41 megawatts are needed to sufficiently power the island. Currently, CUC is producing about 19 to 24 megawatts on a daily basis.



Linemen from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s power division install power lines that will connect to the new Aggreko generators in Lower Base.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

229

From Page 1

Labor Administrative Hearing Officer Herbert D. Soll, however, granted transfer relief to the 229 UIC alien workers, most of them Chinese.

Soll directed each worker to register with Labor's Division of Employment Services no later than Oct. 6, 2008.

The hearing officer gave each worker 30 days from the date of registration to find a suitable new employer and submit a signed employer intent form to Employment Services.

Any worker who fails to file the employment intent form within the 30-day period will be required to report to Jeff Camacho of the Labor Enforcement Section within five days in order to arrange for his or her repatriation.

"In such event, any refusal or failure by the worker to depart from the Commonwealth shall result in the worker's name being forwarded to the Office of the Attorney General for deportation proceedings," Soll said.

He said the job vacancy announcement requirement will be waived if the worker will transfer to a similar job category in another garment factory.

If any employee requests repatriation or the repatriation is arranged following a worker's failure to submit an employer intent form within the required period, the employer of record shall be notified and must provide a repatriation ticket within 15 days.

The worker, Soll said, must depart the CNMI within 15 days after the repatriation ticket is delivered to Labor or the matter will be referred to the Division of Immigration.

On Sept. 21, UIC will join seven other garment factories that have closed since the start of 2008, affecting over a thousand workers.

With UIC's closure, only three garment factories will remain on Saipan.

Many garment factories on Saipan started ceasing operations since January 2005 when the World Trade Organization lifted trade quotas.

CNMI used to have 34 garment factories, contributing some $60 million in direct taxes a year to the local government.

$156M

From Page 1

for the payment of debts owed by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

The updated revenue forecast is reflected in a resolution introduced in the House of Representatives last week. The resolution, once adopted, will set the government spending limit for the period between Oct. 1, 2008 and Sept. 30, 2009.

Speaker Arnold I. Palacios yesterday said it is urgent to pass a new budget given the huge decline in government resources. "We need a spending plan that matches our resources, especially when resources are going down the way it is right now," he said.

No appropriation was passed for fiscal year 2008. The government is currently operating on the FY2007 budget level of $163 million, a figure largely believed to be more than the available resources.

In April, the Fitial administration submitted its budget proposal for FY2009. The House Ways and Means Committee conducted initial review and held public hearings, but the process came to a temporary halt after the committee's chairman, Rep. Ray N. Yumul, left for military service.

Rep. Victor Hocog, who also chairs the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications, has been appointed to take over the Ways and Means Committee.

Palacios said yesterday that the committee has resumed work on the budget, and is expected to introduce a bill soon. He said the Legislature is still hoping a budget will be passed before the fiscal year ends on Sept. 30.

For her part, Sen. Maria Pangelinan, chairwoman of the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, said her committee is preparing a budget bill that can be used as a takeoff point for future talks with the Lower House.

CUC

From Page 1

the Division of Environmental Quality who works within the Safe Drinking Water branch.

"It's been really hard," he said. "The groundwater is potentially contaminated."

Groundwater can have a host of contaminants collected from discharge, runoff or residue of nearby factories, landfills, soil, and sewage and septic tanks, among other things.

When the water pumps go off, turbidity—the measure of cloudiness in water used to indicate water quality and filtration effectiveness—can increase, said Bruce Megarr, CUC deputy director for the Water and Sewer Division.

"[Turbidity] can stir up sediments and can allow bacteria to grow," he said. "We don't like to see pumps go off and on."

Turbidity, which often comes from soil runoff, is associated with higher levels of disease-causing microorganisms like parasites, viruses and some bacteria. The contaminants can cause symptoms of nausea, cramps, diarrhea and headaches, according to the EPA.

Megarr said it is important to let the public know when the fluctuation in pressure is affecting water quality. Last week, a notice was released advising the public to boil their water because of contaminants.

To combat the problem, Chambers said, CUC increases chlorination rate of the water. Chlorinating the water kills the microorganisms, but too much chlorine can also be detrimental to the public's health.

"Chlorine is one of the best things to happen to public water systems," Chambers said.

But, he added, too much can also be detrimental to health.

Studies have shown that there is a link between cancer and water with too much chlorine over a long period of time.

Megarr said proper water pressurization is a concern for CUC, and they are addressing the issue in a number of ways.

First, he said, after CUC began metering the amount of water consumers used rather than using a flat rate, consumption dropped.

Also, a leak detection team is dispatched to areas with two to three hours of pressurized water, Megarr said.

"[The teams] have been very successful in Susupe and Chalan Kanoa, and San Antonio," he added.

CUC is also working to make sure there is plenty of available chlorine, Megarr said. They recently renewed their contract with the chlorine provider and have ordered 36 additional chlorine cylinders. Chlorine injectors with repair kits have also been ordered to "ensure chlorine delivery to water systems is as seamless as possible," he added.

Like everyone else, the CUC Water Division is coping as best it can with the power problem.

"Like every other business on the island, we have difficulties planning for the needs of our customers without adequate power," he said.

LOAD SHEDDING SCHEDULE

8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
Feeder-1 Second partial
Upper Navy Hill, Upper MIHA, 99 Cent store
Feeder-2: Entire Grid
Portions of Lower Base, CPA (Seaport), Beach Road Garapan south to San Jose Intersection

11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Feeder-4: Entire Grid
Portions of Lower Base, Sadog Tasi, Capital Hill, Kagman and portions of Papago (Botanical Garden)
Feeder-7: Entire Grid
Lower Base industrial area, north to Tanapag, Achugao, San Roque, As Matuis and Marpi

2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
Feeder-3: Third Partial
Gualo Rai Intersection south Chalan Kiya Intersection
Lateral: Upper Gualo Rai
Lateral: Taro Sue

5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Kiya 1: Entire Grid
As Terlaje, NMC, Portions of Fina Sisu, San Vicente to Botanical Garden, Lower Dandan Homestead, Upper, Dandan Homested, Isley Field
Kiya-4: Entire Grid
Chalan Kiya, San Jose, Oleai, Susupe, Mount Carmel and south to portions of Chalan Kanoa

8:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.
Kiya-2: Entire Grid
As Lito, Koblerville, As Gonno, San Antonio and Afetnas, portions of Fina Sisu

Source: Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

CUC ahead of schedule in installing lines

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is ahead of schedule in installing power lines that will connect to the new Aggreko generators.

Workers from the CUC Power Division have been working for the last few weeks to erect the six poles and power lines that will deliver the added power to the public. The workers were not scheduled to finish the installation until next week but anticipate finishing today.

"The Power Division is basically preparing itself for when Aggreko is prepared with their program," said Power Division manager Gary Camacho.

He said it was important for the distribution side to be ready so Aggreko can start up the generators on time.

Aggreko is expected to turn on the generators Sept. 12, with the full 15 megawatts of power provided by Sept. 16 or 17. This will bring the island's total power to 39 to 45 megawatts, CUC executive director Antonio Muna said.

About 41 megawatts are needed to sufficiently power the island. As of yesterday afternoon, CUC was producing approximately 27 megawatts of power.

The linemen installing the equipment are currently undergoing safety training led by Pacific Lineman trainer Chris Middleton.

"It's essential we have people properly trained to make independent decisions out in the field," Camacho said. The jobs are dangerous and the necessary training is imperative, he added.

Attempts have been made to provide the training in the past, he said, but "it's more critical today because of the maintenance required; this is an old structure," he said referring to CUC's equipment.

The 20 workers have completed the first year of the two-year program that was funded by a grant, Camacho said.

Middleton said the linemen are using the current installation as hands-on experience.

"They're doing good," he said. "They're getting better and better each day."

Middleton said the workers now have the proper training that they might have lacked in the past.

"They love the training. They've never been trained so they're really grateful," he said.

The training will ultimately save CUC money because right now, when there is a problem, a worker must call a Guam contractor and wait for their input and guidance. Now, the workers will be able to make the necessary adjustments on their own, Middleton said.

CUC has also released their load-shedding schedule, running today through next Friday. Each area will experience three-hour outages one time in a 24-hour period.

'Shanghai flights to draw millions in tourism dollars'

Shanghai flights slated begin serving Saipan later this month could draw millions in tourism dollars to the CNMI according to the Marianas Visitors Authority.

In an interview Thursday, MVA managing director Perry Tenorio said the flights—slated to begin Sept. 29—will consist of 220-seat Boeing 767s flying directly to and from Saipan and Shanghai twice each week, on Saturdays and Tuesdays.

According to MVA data, the Chinese tourism market has previously given a major economic boost to the CNMI of up to $125 million each fiscal year. The new flights could do the same, Tenorio said, noting that Saipan has a special designation from the Chinese government, giving the nation's tourists easier access to the island.

"Part of the draw is that we have the Approved Destination Status from the government," Tenorio said. "Not only that, we're a resort destination with close proximity to China."

News of the Shanghai flights comes amid a major slump in Chinese tourism to the CNMI. MVA statistics released last month showed a 57 percent decline in Chinese visitors for July 2008 compared to July the previous year. A total of 4,107 Chinese tourists arrived in the Commonwealth in July 2007, while only 1,749 arrived in July 2008. MVA in a statement last month attributed the decline to a reduction in the number of charter flights from China reaching the CNMI. ***(Stefan Sebastian)***

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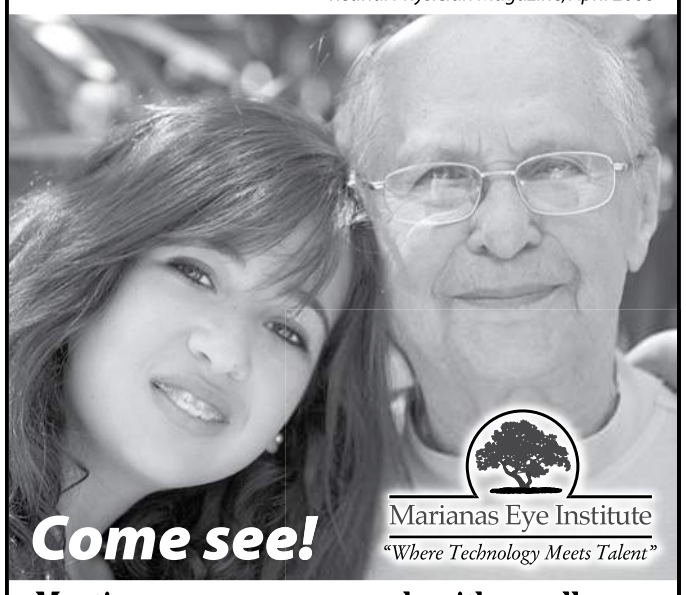

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'Our cabs are safe, provide public service'

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

A leading manager for a local transportation company, Tropical Island, is strongly defending his operation in the face of criticism by Department of Commerce officials, saying his cars are safe and provide a valuable service to a community in dire need of an affordable way to travel on the island.

Commerce officials earlier this week said taxi services operating without approval from the department—which regulates taxi companies in the CNMI—pose a danger to passengers because they are skirting safety and insurance rules designed to protect passengers in the event of an accident. Among these companies, they said, is Tropical Island, which transports people as well as goods throughout Saipan.

Tropical Island was one of six companies cited by Commerce this year in letters urging them to conform to the department's regulations. The other five shut down, yet Tropical Island has challenged the department's enforcement effort with calls for a hearing on the issue.

In an interview Thursday, Tropical Island manager Joseph Sablan took issue with Commerce officials' suggestion that his company's cars may be unsafe or uninsured.

"We are insured," Sablan said. "We have insurance for our drivers and everyone in the cars. Our cars are not a danger to anyone."

Saipan's lack of affordable public transportation and the high cost of regular taxi services, he said, prompted his company to begin operating on the island. Tropical Island, he noted, also provides jobs to people who need them.

"We're only trying to fill a need," he said. "There's no public transportation for people to get around here. Saipan needs a cheaper form of transportation."

Tropical Island chose to forgo abiding by Commerce's regulations, he added, because of the high costs associated with the insurance requirements the department imposes.

However, Sablan said the company's cars are registered locally and have passed safety inspections conducted by the Division of Motor Vehicles. Commerce's enforcement effort, he added, has unfairly targeted Tropical Island while there are scores of unsafe and illegal taxi services roaming the island that may pose a real danger to consumers.

Sablan also faulted Commerce for being unresponsive when his company attempted to resolve the regulatory issues the department had presented to him.

Sex offender Web site in limbo

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety's Sex Offender unit is encountering some problems as it tries to set up a Web site listing the names and basic information of sex offenders living in the CNMI.

The Web site will be similar to the U.S. Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Web site, which lists the name, location, crime convicted for, and other basic information on sex offenders. Offenders are divided by state.

The CNMI Web site is ready to launch, but because of the very general laws in place in the Commonwealth, issues about the different levels of offenses are causing problems, said Officer Tricia Seman of the Sex Offender Registry.

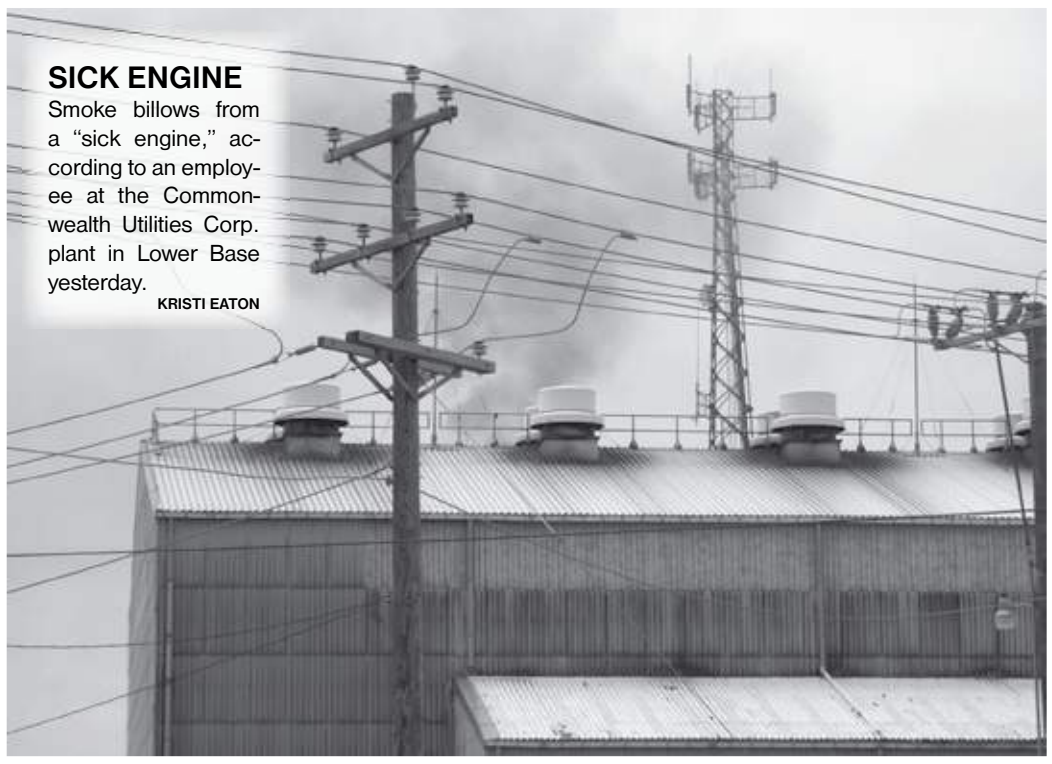
"The biggest setback is our laws are very general," she said. "I want to make sure I'm not going beyond what I can do."

Unlike most states, the CNMI does not have a tiered system based on the sexual act committed. For example, level 1 might constitute a conviction for sexual harassment; level 2 fondling; and level 3, the most severe, might be someone who committed acts against a child, Seman said.

She said she has decided to categorize all offenders at level 3 because it's safer for the community, but the Public Defender's Office is taking issue with her decision because not all offenders have committed the same crime.

"Their argument is legit," but her ultimate concern is the safety of the community, she said. The Public Defender's Office would not comment.

Seman said she's trying to work with the Attorney General's Office so the law can be clarified and, ultimately, the Web site can go online.



SICK ENGINE
Smoke billows from a "sick engine," according to an employee at the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. plant in Lower Base yesterday.
KRISTI EATON

DPS: Only major intersections get cops during outages

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety has been assigning uniformed police officers at major traffic intersections only during power outages.

DPS Traffic Section chief Sgt. Paul Ogumoro said yesterday that their primary concern is to make sure that there will be officers deployed at major intersections when there is no power.

Major intersections are the ones at Microl-San Jose, Chalan Kiya, Navy Hill-Commonwealth Health Center, and Middle Road-Garapan near the Happy Market.

"Majority of people pass through these intersections. We put people there when the traffic lights are out because that's where we think serious accidents would occur," he said.

He said DPS does not have enough resources to cover all the smaller intersections.

Ogumoro advised motorists to treat smaller intersections just like what drivers do at the three-way intersection in front of the Garapan Fire Station.

"Have courtesy, have respect, be attentive, be smart when operating a vehicle. Whenever you approach a traffic light that is down, you treat as it is a stop sign or a U sign," he said.

Ogumoro said police officers will also monitor major intersections at nighttime during outages.

He, however, pointed out that officers will not be standing in the middle of intersections at nighttime during outages for their safety.

On the issue of four to five police cars usually seen parked at the Microl-San Jose intersection during outages in daytime, Ogumoro said these police vehicles are not there the whole day.

"They must have seen a shifting of the guards at the intersection," he explained.

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MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

On behalf of our family, most importantly,
we the children of our beloved mother,

Soledad Takai Tenorio
"Daidai"

Wish to extend our sincere thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase to all relatives, friends, business associates and well wishers for embracing us during our time of bereavement. We are forever grateful for your outpouring support ----- for your generosity, comforting words through cards, e-mails or in person, for your participation at the evening rosaries and morning masses, and most especially, for joining us at the funeral mass. It is indeed a difficult time for us, as we continue to grieve the loss of our dearest mother; but your kind gestures certainly made our sorrows less stressful, and our burdens lighter.

We trust in the Lord that He may ease our pains and heal our wounds. May the Almighty Lord continue to bless you and your families.

Dankulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Annie T./Jesus R. Sablan & Family
Clarence T. Tenorio & Family
Norman T./Keli A. Tenorio & Family
Patricia T./Roman S. Palacios & Family
Frances T./Miguel S. Demapan & Family
Priscilla T. Tenorio/Joseph Guzman & Family

Daily mass is offered at Mount Carmel Cathedral at 6:00AM. Please join us on the final day of morning mass on Tuesday, September 9, 2008.

NEW U.S. ATTORNEYS FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Federal Ombudsman James Benedetto, fourth from left, poses with members of the U.S. Attorney's Office, from left, Assistant U.S. Attorneys Beverly R. McCallum, Eric O'Malley, U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the NMI Leonardo M. Rapadas and Assistant U.S. Attorney Kirk Schuler during Wednesday's press briefing. Benedetto and Schuler are joining the U.S. Attorney's Office effective Sept. 15, 2008.

Abramoff pleads for leniency before sentencing

By MATT APUZZO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—Disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff told a federal judge Wednesday that his lifestyle of trading expensive gifts for political favors crossed the line, even by Washington standards, but said he was "not a bad man" and pleaded for leniency.

Abramoff, the central figure in a corruption scandal that shook up Washington politics and contributed to the Republican loss of Congress in 2004, is scheduled to be sentenced Thursday (Friday on Saipan). In a letter to the court Wednesday, he said even he is shocked to look back on what his life had become.

"It is hard to see the exact moment that I went over the line but, looking backwards, it is amazing for me to see how far I strayed and how I did not see it at the time," Abramoff wrote. "So much of what happens in Washington stretches the envelope, skirts the spirit of the rules, and lives in the loopholes. But even by those standards, I blundered farther than even those excesses would allow."

Abramoff is serving a nearly six-year prison sentence for a fraudulent Florida casino deal. He faces up to 11 years in prison when he is sentenced Thursday for corrupting Capitol Hill lawmakers with expensive meals, golf junkets, luxury sports tickets and other gifts.

But prosecutors are asking for a much more lenient sentence of less than four years. Defense attorneys say he deserves even less time. Since pleading guilty in 2006, Abramoff has been the key witness in his own corruption scandal. He has provided the Justice Department evidence that helped send Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio, and former Deputy Interior Secretary J. Steven Griles to prison.

Abramoff

Abramoff said his cooperation has been extensive. Not only did he confirm what prosecutors knew, he said he also offered new leads and tips, pointed them in different directions and spent countless hours meeting with investigators. Several Capitol Hill aides and powerful political figures have pleaded guilty because of his cooperation.

"My efforts do not even the balance, but they are a good down payment on what I still must do," Abramoff wrote.

He said he has spent the first two years of his prison sentence reflecting on his actions.

"I see that my crimes all had the same cause—my shortsighted and selfish view that the ends could justify the means," he wrote. "I am not a bad man (although to read all the news articles one would think I am Osama bin Laden), but I did many bad things."

U.S. District Judge Ellen Segal Huvelle has wide discretion when it comes to handing down a sentence. She has been lenient at times in the case but has shown little patience for defendants who arrive in her courtroom with excuses. Abramoff will get an opportunity to speak in court.

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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested firms for Construction Management (CM) services for the Saipan International Airport Runway Rehabilitation Package II Phase I Project, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, AIP Nos. 3-69-0002-50/53.

At a minimum, the statements of professional qualification from firms should address the areas generally described below:

1. Overall construction management experience in the Pacific area and especially in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;
2. Construction management experience related to CPA projects funded in whole or in part by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA);
3. Level of proficiency in performing construction management services promptly and level of experience with the FAA and AIP grants;
4. The general reputation of the firm in terms of quality of CM work experience and services performed for AIP projects, and the firm's professional integrity and competence; and
5. Resumes of key personnel including current licenses and registrations of principal, if applicable and a valid CNMI business license.

Interested firms must submit one (1) original and four (4) copies each of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **4:30 p.m., September 19, 2008.**

Statement of qualification must be submitted along with company brochures and completed U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

All inquiries must be directed to the Acting Executive Director of CPA. The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would in its best interest.

Submit the Statement of Qualification to:

Acting Executive Director
Commonwealth Ports Authority
PO Box 501055
Saipan, MP 96950-1055

/s/ LEE C. CABRERA Date: August 19, 2008
Acting Executive Director

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Tuesday, September 8, 2008, at 9:00 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board's office at Bldg #1336 Ascension Drive, Capitol Hill. Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Determination of Quorum**
3. **Review and Adoption of Agenda**
4. **Review and Adoption of Minutes (7/1/08 and 8/5/08)**
5. **Communications from Governor's Office & Legislature**
   A. Governor's Office
   B. Legislature
6. **Chairman's Report**
7. **Executive Director's Report**
8. **Investigator's Report**
9. **Old Business**
10. **New Business**
    A. EFC – CPA Acting Director
    B. Alexander Drilling - Soil Testing
    C. New Projects in the CNMI
11. **Miscellaneous Business**
12. **Executive Session - The Board may vote to meet in Executive Session.**
13. **Adjournment of Meeting**

/s/ Francisco Q. Guerrero
Chairman

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

SEPTEMBER 05, 2000

CUC wants govt to settle $12-M

The legislative proposal to transfer responsibility of paying government utilities to each department and agency is a welcome move, but the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation still insists on settling unpaid bills amounting to over $12 million. CUC Executive Director Timothy P. Villagomez said the move by the Legislature will help in cutting power and water consumption of public offices because agencies and departments will each have to pay what they use.

CNMI asked to show Saipan is a profitable route

The Commonwealth's efforts to encourage more foreign carriers to dispatch air transport services into the Northern Marianas depends largely on the government's ability to make a strong presentation among airline companies that Saipan could be a profitable route.

Probe MTC's deposit policy

The chair of the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications has pressed the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for justification on a recent policy change regarding security deposit imposed on local telephone lines.

SEPTEMBER 05, 2001

AGO: Revoke sex workers' entry permits

The Attorney General's Office is asking the Department of Labor and Immigration to revoke the entry and work permits of more than 50 nonresident workers who were allegedly engaged in prostitution activities. CNMI Attorney General Herb D. Soll said petitions seeking to revoke the entry and work permits of 52 alien workers had been filed before the DOLI for action.

New approach in tourism urged

The CNMI has to pull itself up by its own boot straps if it wants to break out from the pattern of recession that is besetting the Commonwealth. Thus said Tan Holdings Corporation President Willie Tan during the Rotary Club's regular Tuesday meeting at the Hyatt Hotel-Saipan, as he made a case for the CNMI helping itself weather the bad economic times.

Hofschneider to serve in stay limit task force

Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider has been appointed to serve as the House representative to the task force that will study the impact of the proposal to implement a limit on the amount of time that alien workers can stay in the CNMI. In a letter to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio dated September 4, House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial informed the Governor that he has appointed Hofschneider to represent the House in the Public Law 11-69 Task Force.

SEPTEMBER 05, 2002

AGO expected to issue opinion on actual budget ceiling

Reiterating the gist of his letter to the House of Representatives on Tuesday, Gov. Juan N. Babauta assured lower chamber lawmakers yesterday that not a single cent of the House's money has been impounded and that they can continue operating until the end of this month. Which is exactly what most House lawmakers did. Despite Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider's statement about the lower chamber's possible closure due to the budget deficit, all legislators' offices remained open yesterday, though most employees took advantage of their paid sick leave or vacation leave benefits to make sure that they will be paid for work done.

'No need to shut down operations'

Gov. Juan N. Babauta is not exactly famous for lightning-quick reflexes but he surprised everyone last Tuesday, with a two-page response already flying on its way to the House of Representatives even as House Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider was finishing up his speech on the possible closure of the lower chamber. The tone of the letter was also notable in that it was neutral, polite and even-handed, with Babauta expressing neither encouragement nor criticism of the House's position, besides saying the suspension of operations by any government entity is not required under the Planning and Budgeting Act, the CNMI Constitution or Public Law 11-41.

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Coolgate Toothpaste 8.2oz. **2 for $6.00**

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Mr. Bush's Blue Legacy

President Bush may be on the brink of doing something stunningly at odds with his record as one of the worst environmental stewards ever to inhabit the White House. He is considering setting aside three vast, remote corners of the Pacific Ocean for protection, an area larger than Alaska and Texas combined.

In a memo last month, Mr. Bush directed his administration to develop a plan for creating sanctuaries in the waters around the Northern Mariana Islands, including the Mariana Trench, the world's deepest; Rose Atoll in American Samoa; and parts of a long, sprawling collection of reefs and atolls known as the Line Islands.

The waters are as isolated and pristine as any part of the globe can be these days, home to countless species of fish and plants, rare turtles and seabirds and glorious reefs. The Mariana Trench is a staggering place; it could swallow Everest. The islands are mostly coral flyspecks, but if the waters around them are protected to the fullest extent possible—to the 200-mile territorial limit—the sanctuaries would total nearly 900,000 square miles. That is bigger than all of Mexico.

Mr. Bush has done something nearly as spectacular once before. In June 2006, he created the Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands. Over the strident objections of some commercial-fishing interests, Mr. Bush created a no-fishing sanctuary covering 140,000 square miles, an area larger than all of the country's national parks combined.

Mr. Bush used the Antiquities Act of 1906, a little-known statute that allows presidents, by executive order, to protect public lands by designating them as national monuments.

His decision won wide praise, except from the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, known as Wespac, one of eight federal agencies assigned to protect fish and fishing in United States waters. Wespac is notorious among environmental groups as a chronic enabler of reckless commercial fishing.

Wespac's executive director, Kitty Simonds, is condemning this new idea as punishment of the "brown and yellow people" of American Samoa and the Northern Marianas. In fact, her agency's customary attitude—fish here, fish now—ignores the strong local support across the Pacific for farsighted stewardship of imperiled oceans, a resource that belongs to future generations as much as it does to all of us.

Mr. Bush's proposal could shrink in scale as details are hammered out and compromises made. He has the power to make the sanctuaries absolute no-fishing, no-mining zones — the best option. His memo also left open the possibility of allowing some fishing and mineral extraction in the sanctuaries. We hope he resists the forces of exploitation, and closes as much as possible of those stretches of the vast blue Pacific to human meddling.

That would be an achievement for the ages. All we can say is: Go for it, Mr. President. ***(The New York Times)***

MARGULIES
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Labor Day celebrates the noble effort of toil and sweat throughout the year...
I'll say... job hunting sure is hard work!
WARN UR
RECESSION

UR Images: An Idiot's Guide to Humanities

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

PSS opens its doors Monday after taking the Governor's suggestion for the delay of school opening under advisement, to which an Executive Committee from Capital Hill was immediately convened and dispatched to check on the readiness of the school plants and equipment, but saner minds decided to weather the power on-nages (that's the opposite of "outages," Joseph). The BoE depended on teachers' creativity and the students' imagination to begin forming the communities of learning in each of the schools before the Aggreko promise may cast another layer of helplessness and despair in the communal morale.

Logistics notwithstanding, the issue is what guides teachers when they teach the learners. To be sure, one has to focus on reading and writing, listening and speaking, and we know that listening is the big hole on that quadrant, locally and nationally. My class begins the day with 15 minutes of silence, if only so that the students can hear themselves think. Mathematics, the patterns and ratios of parts and whole, along with science and its inquisitive experiential methods, provides the language and the method for understanding quantifiable data. The social face of that database is the domain of social studies, dealing with time (history), space (geography), social roles (civics and government), sustenance structures (economics), and communal significance (culture). Common standards and benchmarks accompany this core curriculum from K to 12. Teachers then add their individual uniqueness and creativity into the academic stew.

I add magic to mine. Following Jung's archetypes, we conjure up images of beginnings, or Ur images, following Jung's contention that each of us carry these images as they are transmitted by our culture(s) even without being self-conscious about it. Ur images are far below the verbal levels of thought for they are the intuitive ways a culture approaches life.

Since preteens in 6th grade (11-13 yrs. old) finally begin to create images of themselves as individuals and the world we live in, from its ancient beginnings to its current struggles, (at this grade, Social Studies is thematically on Ancient Civilizations), this is as good a time to confront them with pictures of the heritage of our global humanity.

The *Fiddler on the Roof* has a raucous song called "Tradition." This sense of remembering what had gone before strongly emanates from the desert. No tracks and pathways remain long on sand dunes. It is therefore imperative to remember the details of a previous journey. The stars become practical because of their seemingly predictable positions once pegged within a cycle but they remain transcendent reality. The *ruah* (the desert fierce wind) takes on character at once mysterious and awesome, an immanent presence to be feared and revered.

This Ur is up against the desert, preoccupied with history, and its inner conflict is between fate and freedom. Its quest is to know the right tradition (memory), its key is social style and its communal form is the covenant of the brotherhood. The people of the book, from the Vedas to the Koran, are examples of this Ur I color-code Tan.

Standing in the middle of the Deccan Plateau, one's imagination is bounded by the high and cold Himalayas up north, the humid Indus Valley and the Ganges River, the dry eastern and western Ghats and the turbulent monsoon that annually sweeps in from the Bay of Bengal. At a Mumbai bazaar any given day, it is not unusual to step on decomposing goat dung while being affronted by the flowery scent of myriad of essences. This Ur simultaneously inhales and exhales, emitting a deep sound "Ohm" that comes from the deep bowels of one's being. It is the profound symbol of acceptance that takes in, affirms and celebrates the One in the Many and the Many in the One. I take the cultures of the South Asian subcontinent and color code this Ur Brown. It is confronted by the mountains and is preoccupied with consciousness, its quest is for unity at all cost, with methods as key. The caste system exemplified this attempt at unity of and in diversity.

The flood plains confront this Ur, its river's yellow silt, the Loess, devastates crops and livestock but also leaves fertility and regenerates growth. It is preoccupied with community among competing forces, recognizes the paradox of complementary opposites, the yin and the yang, and quests for form that would honor and bowed to, not deny or banish, the opposite other. Strategy is key to moderation and harmony, e.g., keeping spicy hot sweet and sour at bay in cuisine, and filial piety and the preeminence of the family is its social structure. I color code this Ur Yellow and the ancient ways of the Zhung Guo, the Hangkok and the Nippon drank deeply in this well. So do a fifth of the population in our Commonwealth.

See UR on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Deputy Director of Notebooks

By ED STEPHENS

Ed is a pilot, economist, and writer. He holds a degree in economics from UCLA and is a former U.S. naval officer. His column runs every Friday. Visit Ed at TropicalEd.com and SaipanBlog.com.

It's that time again: Some families in the Commonwealth are launching their kids to distant colleges in the mainland. I am not (yet) aware that there is a CNMI Department of Notebook Computers to provide free computers to the Right People, so, barring that, the indignities of the free market will require people to pay for notebook computers for their school-bound kin.

It's an important purchase. It's an important choice. That's why I take a look at it here every one or two years, as new generations of computers are rolling out.

Although I usually have some brands or models to suggest, this time around, I'd rather highlight the fact that there's really no objectively best computer. When it comes to notebooks, we all have different priorities. Every notebook is a series of tradeoffs. For example:

Someone who types 100 words a minutes will have different priorities than a hunt-and-peck typist.

Someone who writes spreadsheets will have different needs than someone writing free-verse poetry and nose-flute sonatas, who will have different needs than someone doing computerized graphic art.

Someone who travels a lot with their computer has different needs than someone who doesn't.

Someone with a large inventory of old peripherals, or of old software, will be in a different situation than a newbie who is gearing up from a clean slate.

Someone who likes Windows Vista has different options than someone who would rather drink a pint of weed poison than use Vista.

And someone who plays Turbo Killer Space Munchies on his computer will have different priorities than someone who doesn't.

Our perspectives are, therefore, necessarily subjective. As for me, I travel a lot, so lightness and reliability are critical; and I am a fast touch-typist, so I have definite preferences for keyboard layouts as well. I use old software that I need (for example, Quattro Pro version 7, for spreadsheets, has yet to be beat; subsequent versions are worse, not better. This de-evolution in software is surprisingly, if not sickeningly, common). I don't play Space Munchies, or edit video, or download music, or use Skype, or use web cams, or want the latest software, but there are a lot of people who will check "all of the above."

Although a generic desktop computer can serve just about everyone, there is no one-size-fits-all notebook.

Would you like to know what brands the world is buying? I've been curious about that myself.

An outfit called Digitimes published data (see my blog for a link) on global notebook computer market share. In descending order, the top five notebook players for the first quarter of this year were HP (20.8 percent market share), Dell (15.1 percent), Acer (14.6 percent), Toshiba (9.3 percent), and Lenovo (7.5 percent). Apple, by the way, was listed seventh at 4.6 percent, but they are growing very fast and overtook Sony (now in eighth place).

Boiling things down to Saipan's case, I asked computer store MEGAbyte of Saipan to highlight a few of their wares. They mentioned two Acers (one with a 15.4 inch screen, another with a 17 incher) and a Toshiba (15.4 inches). I think a buyer is far better off going with a local vendor than running risks from mail order, since, for one thing, it takes hands-on time with a notebook to see how it fits and feels, and, for another, local support is a real ace up the sleeve when setting up a computer.

By contrast, if you'd like some new gray hairs, try having a notebook computer sent from a distant vendor, only to discover it doesn't work right, or is poorly designed, only to discover the vendor won't do a thing about it. No vendor wants an "open box" to re-stock, broken or otherwise. Your credit card company will NOT automatically play financial Batman and rescue you from these problems.

If it seems like everyone, not just students, is shopping for a notebook, that's because, well, they really are. Global notebook sales have (says Digitimes) boomed by a 35 percent annual rate.

That's a heck of a trend, so maybe it really is time to appoint me Deputy Director of Notebooks. I'm not qualified for such a job, but since when does that matter?

Our future: A matter of policy

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Policy is defined as a "course of action" or "procedure." This brings our discussion to the two new federal policies on labor and immigration that will be transferred to appropriate federal agencies by June of 2009. Local control of these two issues will be gone, forever! There's no more room for diplomatic dialogue. It died in the failed 902 talks years ago.

If I may note, discussions started on how the new federal takeover of labor and immigration would be implemented. But the other side has been negative, given that their mandates are federal laws, today! It's implementation time, no more, no less. If I may reiterate, there's no more room for dialogue!

If these policies were at their incipiency (proposed legislation), then it is reasonable to expect the solicitation of views from the CNMI. Their research work would have been thorough and geared toward granting the local government greater latitude to retain greater degree of self-government, sustain current investments and open opportunities for future investments.

This isn't the case today. The federal law on labor doesn't guarantee employment of over 80 local Department of Labor employees. It will, by June of 2009, deny the CNMI $5 million we generate from foreign workers. *It will result in 80 percent loss in guest workers. This will force the crippling of the tourism industry. Worse yet, it will translate into nearly 60 percent in economic contraction in an already dismal economy.*

It should be understood that the process for dialogues (902 talks) no longer exist. Labor and immigration are federal laws. Dialogue today is a Johnny-come-lately. Do we acquiesce their implementation because we fear standing up for our rights to self-government? The obvious violation of our rights to self-government *makes it the more vital that we spend $400,000 to prevent the loss of $5 million in revenues generated from foreign workers and other disastrous consequences and unintended economic destruction.*

The evolution of these policies is loaded with arrogance and the obvious exclusion of the NMI from the outset. It is clear that evil geniuses behind the construct of new mandates hid behind misplaced emotional gratification to please their distracted bosses shoving aside listening to our voices. They listened to others rather than the indigenous people.

It is obvious that there's hardly a holistic approach to studying, with the use of dual prism (theirs and ours), how best to approach maintaining and improving dismal economic conditions here. There's also the dire urgency and need to resolve instituting sustainable economic programs on a resource-poor archipelago. It didn't matter to them and never did anyway.

More consultations with atrophied subcommittee staffers were held with local leadership. I liken it to a meeting of physicians to save a patient undergoing surgery bleeding profusely because they failed to heed his hemophiliac condition—a hemophiliac bleeds even from a tiny cut. What a way to address the livelihood of our people when theirs is the mandate to "provide a progressively higher standard of living." That isn't going to happen, which violates our rights to self-government.

I hope that the arrogance and domineering attitude of these staffers isn't a microcosm of our future relationship with the federal government. At best, it looks dismal; at worst, a good beginning to force them into understanding the history of the unique agreement negotiated between two sovereign governments in 1972. It further illustrates their determination to completely destroy our livelihood. They never cared about forging policy stability on a highly sensitive and fragile island economy.

This is the crux of a very unsettling sentiment in the perpetuation of "their interest" over the interest of the indigenous people of these islands. How much longer must we endure the indignities of being shoved aside on matters of policy affecting our livelihood? Do we take this matter lying down or shouldn't we rally behind the governor's plan to take this matter to court? Think about it. It's your future individually and our people, collectively.

John S. DelRosario is the Secretary of the Department of Public Lands.

UR

From Page 10

From Mt. Elbros, the highest point of the Caucasus range, one overlooks the Black and the Caspian Seas. Its northern slope residents confronted the North Sea while their southern cousins headed for the Aegean. The inhospitable Baltic-North Sea created the defensive structure of the dikes and dams, the protective moat around the castle, and the confinement the heat in the chambers on those long winter nights—the domestication of the dreadful natural order. The clear but deep waters down the fjords created this Ur, confronted by the Sea, preoccupied with rationality to shed light to the dialectic of order and chaos, being and non-being. Its quest is for meaning, rationality of the spoken and written word its key, and its social form the intentional community, the State. I color-code this Ur White. The political tradition from the Code of Hammurabi to the US Immigration Law of 2008 derive from the ways and understandings of this Ur.

The heartbeat of the tropical rainforest in West Africa was once described with terms as "black" and "dark" when these were more descriptive rather than pejorative. The predictability of the flooding Nile, and the drumbeat of the savannah, the sound of the stomping elephants and slithering hissing sound of the snake, all too familiar to jazz aficionados, is a tradition that was confronted by the jungle, and preoccupied with the beat. Were John of Patmos writing from this vein, he would have said: "In the beginning was the beat, and the beat was with God, and the beat was God." Its quest is for balance between the aggressiveness of natural powers with the assertiveness of the human brawn. The key is to keep with natures' rhythms and the social group is the tribe.

In Lagos, I once asked my Nigerian friend while we were riding a bus why, given the new wealth of the country, didn't people use deodorant. He looked at me patronizingly and firmly declared: "If you cannot distinguish people's smell, how will you know which tribe you belong to, and which one is your friend or foe?" Raw passion and vitality is the preoccupation of this Ur and I color-code it with the politically incorrect Black.

Red hot lava flows from volcanoes after a violent eruption and the cultures by the Ring of Fire, particularly in the cordilleras of Norte and Sud America, evolved a preoccupation with temporality, the dichotomy between day-by-day successiveness interrupted by the wild eternality of the discontinuous.

When I listened to a radio in Lima, Peru, one would hear a recorded message on time, every minute on the minute. This consciousness of time gave us the practice of siesta and the fireworks of fiesta. It reveals a discipline to endure continuity and the willingness to feast on the discontinuous. In short, surprise is built-in to the schedule. This is the TGIF Ur. The up-against-ness is the volcano and programming the eruption even when one knows it can come anytime is its response. Living on the edge fuels motivity; metropolitan Mexico City with almost 20 million people sits on a former lake that is the tip of an extant volcano.

I color-code this the Red Ur. The quest is participation, and democracy is becoming to be the defining character of the Americas and its indigenous cultures. The *Allyu* (check this out, Joseph), the extended family, is its social form and the creation of designs is its method.

The description above is science to the degree that Loren Eisely and Buckminster Fuller would be dubbed as scientists. I prefer to call it myth-making in its cultural anthropology sense, which is spinning to provide a handle for understanding and illumination.

The new Earth clamors for a new mosaic, not a melting pot. At this stage, my image is of six strands wrapped separately inside a cable. I would color code this the Blue Ur, my image of the fragile planet. Its preoccupation would be a one-liner: All that has been, thanks! All that will be, yes! Its mantra would be: all the earth belongs to all the people (economics); all the decisions of history belongs to all the people (politics); and all the gifts of humanness belongs to all the people (culture).

It is not a question of whether one agrees with this description of humanity. The question is what myth do you go by, and for teachers, what is the underlying Ur image(s) that inevitably color your teaching. Welcome to my global human.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°

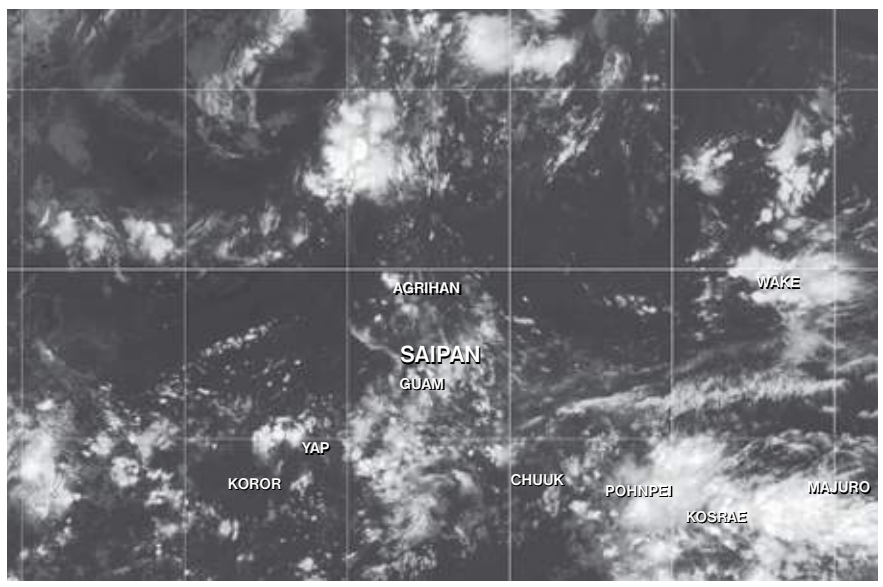
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼76
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼76
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼72
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼77
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	▲59	▼47
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼65
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	▲89	▼80
Honolulu	Showers	▲85	▼76
London	Rain	▲64	▼53
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲84	▼64
Manila	Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲63	▼50
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲90	▼79
New York	Partly Sunny	▲85	▼70
Osaka	Showers	▲85	▼71
Paris	Rain	▲63	▼56
Pusan	Cloudy	▲78	▼72
Rome	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼68
Salem	Sunny	▲83	▼50
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼58
Seoul	Cloudy	▲86	▼60
Tokyo	Showers	▲83	▼73
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼69

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:15PM, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Converging south winds between a low pressure system near Japan and a ridge over Minamitori Shima is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Iwo To island or north of a line from 24N137E to 24N144E. A surface trough extends northeastward from a weak circulation centered west of Koror near 8N130E to just north of the Marianas at 22N145E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring along the trough axis north of Koror and northwest of Yap within 60 miles of 10N from 134E to 137E. Converging trade winds east of the trough axis are producing similar conditions over Saipan, Tinian, Rota, Guam and southward to north of the equator or within 120 miles of a line from 16N147E to 10N142E to 5N144E. Strong trade-wind convergence associated with a trade-wind surge is triggering numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms over Pohnpei, Kosrae and Butaritari but south of Kwajalein and Majuro or south-southwest of a line from 11N159E to 5N175E. Surface convergence is combining with upper-level divergence to create scattered showers and a few thunderstorms over Wake Island and northward or north of a line from 18N162E to 18N171E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
5:16AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
11:43AM Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
5:17PM Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
10:32PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:05AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:05AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:05AM	6:25 PM
Monday	6:05AM	6:24 PM
Tuesday	6:05AM	6:23 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	10:25AM	9:56PM
Saturday	11:18AM	10:41PM
Sunday	12:10PM	11:29PM
Monday	1:03PM	
Tuesday	1:53PM	12:20AM

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The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	4:00am	4:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099	5:00am	7:30am	Daily
NW 078	8:55am	2:00pm	Daily
NW 075	4:55pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:20pm	6:55pm	Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:55am	11:35am	Daily

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:50am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am	1,5

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	7:00pm	8:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:15am	2:50pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:30am+1	Daily
NW 100	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	9:00pm	1:30am+1	Daily

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:40am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	4,7

Manila-Guam

CO 892	11:45am	8:25pm+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	10:55pm	4:30am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:20pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Kapena

Shimbros Music did it again! The terrific group "Kapena" from our sister island of Hawaii was at the Fiesta Resort last Saturday, Aug. 30, 2008, and they blasted the power outage away with a command performance on stage right here on Saipan.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Mr. Paul Shimizu of Shimbros Music for his kindness to invite me, my guest, and the entire family to hear Kapena perform on stage again. You see, about 15 years ago, on Kapena's first Pacific island tour (Hawaiian Sun Splash) I was their opening act, which took us all through Micronesia. It was a fond memory as Paul and I sat together admiring the new Kapena style that is tailored for the new ages. Paul was so courteous to have Kelly boy acknowledge my presence by dedicating the song *Sowetto* for me and my guests.

It was a first class show with a well-mannered crowd, all sporting good times together. Even my niece, Rep. Tina Sablan, was dancing the night away! The climax of the concert was when Kelly Boy's 16-year-old daughter held her breath on a single note that went all the way to the moon, to Hawaii and back to Saipan before exhaling. It was murderous! I almost came out of my wheelchair. The sweetness of her voice, I know, charmed all hearts in front of her. And man, was Parker the best? Well, it was the first time I actually heard him perform and he blew me away! Parker can create and recreate keyboard sounds like nobody's business and he's got the most pleasant showmanship voice my ears have ever trained on. You're the best, Ole!

The entire CNMI applauds Shimbros Music for always bringing in the best acts to Saipan. As Paul and I sat next to each other enjoying the Kapena perform, he whispered to me, "He and I can unite the islands together through music." I am quite sure what he meant, and I answered him, "Yes, indeed!" Then we shook hands and he said it's a promise. What a guy that Paul is! Thank you so much, bro!

Alexandro "The Colonel" Sablan
Dandan, Saipan

Young indigenous in support of monument

Please allow me to add my voice to the the chorus of young indigenous locals in support of the Marianas Trench National Marine Monument.

Many may be surprised that I am writing this letter considering who my father is. This letter is not meant to be disrespectful, but there comes a time to speak up. I ask our leaders to please listen to us young people. Our leaders should be asking the young people in this community what they think because we are the ones who are going to have to live with their decisions for decades to come.

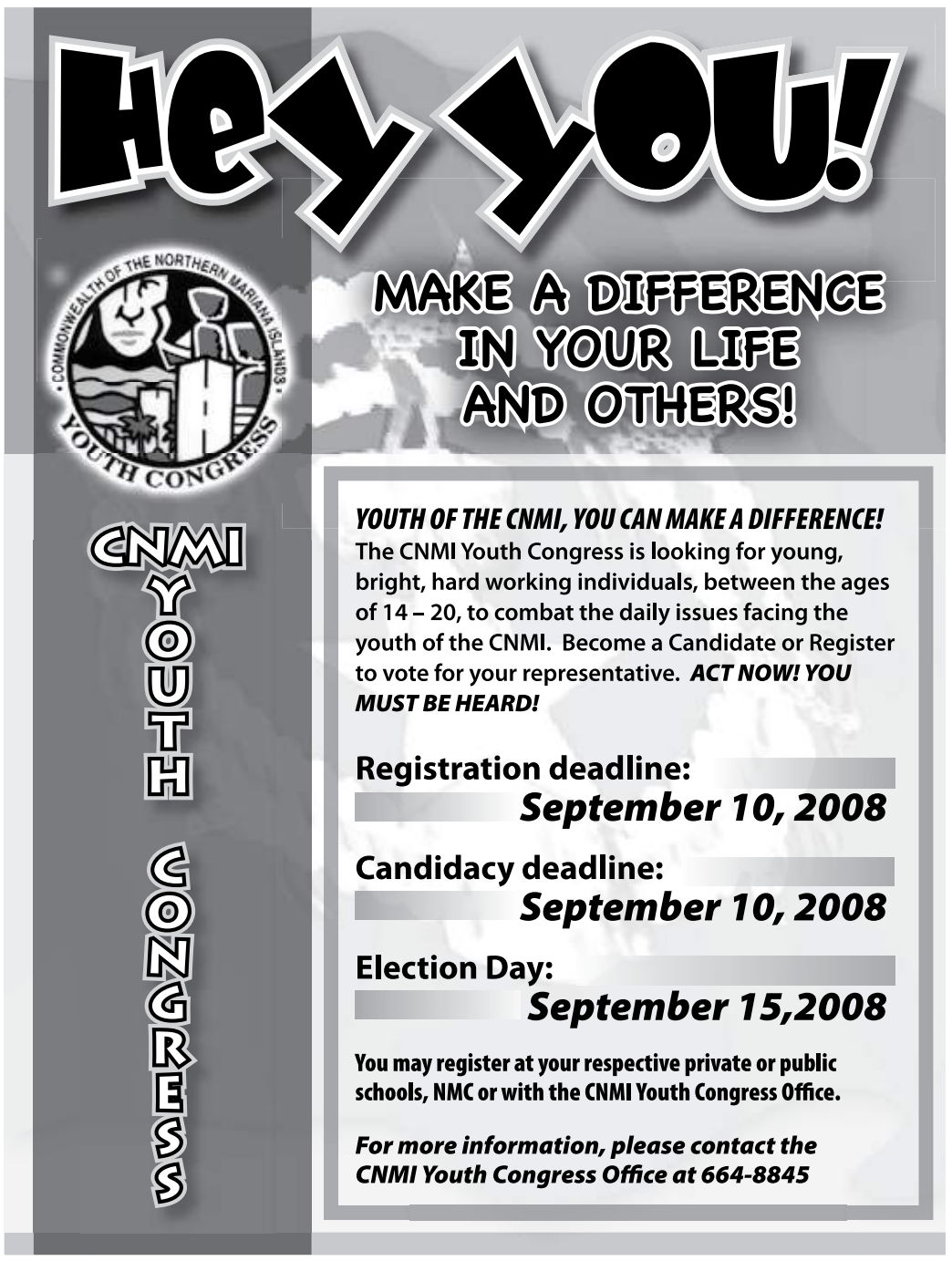
The monument would lead to many educational opportunities for us young people. Educational opportunities lead to jobs. Most importantly, our leaders have the opportunity to protect our islands for my generation and generations to come.

Aleth Kae Atalig
Garapan, Saipan

A plea for CUC

Dear CUC owner,
Did you know that a lot of people are suffering, so stop and please put the price of power lower and make everyday a better day. Please. Some people don't even sleep at night because there is no power. CUC, can you please, please make every day a better day. You turn off the power mostly every night and day at Garapan. One time there was no power for one day and we're tired of it. So you really made a very big mistake, so help and be nice and turn the power most of the times. You can turn off the power four times a month but please try your best. Please. Everyone needs CUC to do everything right. Please.

KiKi
4th grader at Ladera


Hey You!
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
YOUTH CONGRESS
MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE AND OTHERS!
CNMI YOUTH CONGRESS
YOUTH OF THE CNMI, YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
The CNMI Youth Congress is looking for young, bright, hard working individuals, between the ages of 14 – 20, to combat the daily issues facing the youth of the CNMI. Become a Candidate or Register to vote for your representative. ACT NOW! YOU MUST BE HEARD!
Registration deadline:
September 10, 2008
Candidacy deadline:
September 10, 2008
Election Day:
September 15,2008
You may register at your respective private or public schools, NMC or with the CNMI Youth Congress Office.
For more information, please contact the CNMI Youth Congress Office at 664-8845

MICROL TOYOTA
SPECIALS OF THE WEEK

2000 CELICA 2DR
Manual, Blue, Stock: U08-043P
License: ABZ838
Mileage: 72097
PRICE
$7,999

USED CARS

STOCK	YEAR	MODEL	TRANS.	MILEAGE	COLOR	LICENSE #	PRICE	REDUCED PRICE
TOYOTA SEDANS								
R08-011F	2007	YARIS 4DR	AUTO	65940	SILVER	ACC-154	11,399	
R08-008F	2006	CAMRY LE 4DR	AUTO	18576	BEIGE	ADN-161	15,999	
GM CARS								
R08-005F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	114073	BLUE	ACB-544	6,999	
R07-013F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	39164	ORANGE	ADC-022	~~9,599~~	7,599
R07-034F	2005	OPTRA 4DR.	AUTO	14592	SILVER	ACD-020	~~10,999~~	9,499
LEXUS								
R08-003F	2003	LEXUS LS430	AUTO	54477	IVORY	ADU-502	~~29,999~~	28,999
TOYOTA TRUCKS								
R07-038F	2004	TACOMA 4X2 XTRACAB	AUTO	49609	BEIGE	ABV-159	~~11,899~~	10,999
U08-014P	2004	TACOMA 4X2	MANUAL	44000	WHITE	ACA-948	~~12,499~~	11,999
OTHER CARS & TRUCKS								
U07-106P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX 4DR	AUTO	53147	SILVER	ADF-401	~~8,999~~	7,999
U07-107P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX 4DR	AUTO	48755	SILVER	ADF-421	~~8,999~~	7,999
U07-034T	2000	NISSAN MAXIMA GXE 4DR.	AUTO	68648	WHITE	ACT-812	~~10,999~~	8,399
U07-104T	2003	NISSAN MURANO SE	AUTO	32000	PEWT	ABZ-615	~~16,799~~	15,299
U08-035T	2000	NISSAN ALTIMA GXE 4DR SDN	AUTO	64846	GREEN	ABS-748	6,999	
U08-038T	2001	MITS MONTERO WGN	AUTO	93155	BEIGE	CVS-88	7,999	
U07-095T	1999	MAZDA MILLENIA 4DR.SEDAN	AUTO	91014	SILVER	ABP-583	~~7,999~~	7,099
GM SPORT UTILITY								
U08-036T	2002	TRAILBLAZER 4WD	AUTO	36460	RED	ACB-993	9,999	
SPORT UTILITY								
U07-064T	2001	4RUNNER 4WD	AUTO	56882	CHAMPAIGNE	ABY-153	~~14,599~~	12,599
U07-050T	2002	RAV4 4DR 4WD	AUTO	39182	WHITE	ABW-677	~~13,699~~	12,799
R08-007F	2006	RAV4 4DR 2WD LTD	AUTO	20311	WHITE	ACE-344	~~19,185~~	19,099

MICROL TOYOTA
Corner Beach Road and Chalan Mnsr. Guerrero in San Jose
Telephone: 234-5911 | Fax: 234-6514 | www.microlsaipan.com
TOYOTA ACDelco

Clarifications to 'An achievement in conservation'

I would like to comment on and clarify some misconceptions made by Mr. Ken Kramer in his Letter to the Editor on Wednesday, Aug. 27, in the *Saipan Tribune* under the heading "An achievement in conservation."

First, Ken states that commercial fisherman will undoubtedly set up a permanent presence on the outskirts of the marine monument, where they will find the only profitable fishing. The resources that Ken is referring to are primarily pelagic tunas and billfish, which would be the only species that commercial fishermen would be interested in from an economic standpoint. In the fisheries science and management field, we refer to those species as Highly Migratory Species or HMS.

As the name implies, these species migrate great distances across the Pacific Basin, while some even undertake trans-equatorial (across the equator) and trans-oceanic (from one ocean to another) migrations. Additionally, the migratory routes of HMS are influenced by major oceanographic events such as El Niño (sea surface temperature warming), La Niña (sea surface temperature cooling), as well as the dynamic transition zone chlorophyll front, making the migratory routes of HMS highly variable.

Moreover, the spawning of oceanic pelagic species occurs over vast areas in the Pacific in warm surface waters with the locations, much like the migratory routes of adults being heavily influenced by various oceanographic variables. As expected, eggs and larvae are distributed widely. Therefore, the HMS that Ken refers to are not restricted to arbitrarily determined two-dimensional spatial boundaries on the high seas, as proposed by the Pew Environment Group.

Ken has actually confused the spillover effect, often used to describe the movement—due to density dependent factors—of generally shallow-water MPA-reared bottom-habitat dependent fish to adjacent areas outside the MPA boundaries where harvest is permitted, with the reality of the life history and ecology of the pelagic HMS.

Second, Ken writes, "All other oceanic waters are predicted to be overfished by the year 2050, according to numerous scientific reports." What Ken has referred to was one paper published in 2006 in *Science* by Worm et al. (2006) that purports a worldwide collapse of fisheries resources by 2048. The publication of this paper, aptly coined as "Tunageddon 2048" by John Tierney of *The New York Times* (Nov. 4, 2006) for its alarmist assertion, received widely distributed worldwide media coverage at the same time Congress was debating the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the United Nations was debating a ban on high seas bottom-trawling.

Caputi (2007) suggested that this was a textbook study in disseminating misinformation disguised as science with the express purpose of influencing political debate. The very notion that fisheries worldwide would collapse by a prescribed date caused reactions from extreme concern to practical skepticism. Comments by fishery professionals on the Worm et al (2006) paper noted various shortcomings of the analysis, beginning with the reliability of the data sets used, assumptions made about those data sets, the use of catch data to reflect stock abundance trends, the model used to fit the data, as well as the extrapolation of neashore reef and estuarine studies to pelagic ecosystems (Hlker et al 2007; Jaenicke 2007; Longhurst 2007; Wilberg Miller 2007).

Dr. Ray Hillborn of the University of Washington (CBC.ca News Dec. 8, 2006) in reference to the 2048 deadline (no pun intended) stated that, "This particular prediction has zero credibility within the scientific community." An earlier prelude paper in *Nature* authored by Myers Worm (2003) that attempted to conclude that worldwide pelagic fish stocks had been reduced to 10 percent of their original stock size was also widely refuted by prominent fisheries scientists for reasons including but not limited to the use of aggregated catch-per-unit-of-effort(CPUE), interpretation of the aggregated CPUE with respect to individual stocks, misunderstanding of the dynamics of longline fishing and the size and age structure of the target species, and an overly restrictive definition of the spatial scale of the tropical ocean (Walters 2003; Hampton et al 2003; Hampton et al. 2005; Polacheck 2006; Siebert et al 2006; Uozomi 2006).

Hampton et al (2003) concluded that Myers and Worm do the fisheries community a disservice by applying a simplistic analysis to the available data, which exaggerates declines in abundance and implies unrealistic rebuilding benchmarks. Thus, the declared reductions of worldwide pelagic stocks, as well as the notion of a worldwide fisheries collapse by 2048, after appropriate peer-review that included closer examination of the data and the methodologies employed, were concluded to be erroneous.

It should be emphasized that these two studies were funded by the Pew Charitable Trust, whose stated goal is the creation of large ocean no-take MPAs. Forrest Pitcher (2006) noted fundamental scientific flaws with a study that attempted to claim significant overfishing in Australia, to quote: "It is evident that careless interpretation of fisheries statistics increases confusion and may undermine the credibility of legitimate conservation efforts." The authors then concluded of the Pew-funded study, "We recommend that the Pew Charitable Trust withdraw this report from any further mailings and publish a statement recognizing the ill-informed and misleading nature of the arguments presented within the report."

It is obviously apparent that the results of any scientific study funded by Pew be viewed with a high-degree of skepticism, as such studies appear to attempt to fit analysis to pre-determined conclusions.

Third, Ken also stated, "... rapidly growing human populations around the world and the billions upon billions of mouths needing nourishment." In order to feed those billions and billions, as Ken employs the classic expression from the late Dr. Carl Sagan, nations will continue to harvest fisheries resources. Unfortunately, what Pew and their supporters have failed to envision are fisheries that continue to harvest, but in a more efficient and accurate manner. That is, fisheries that harvest the appropriate life cycles of the resource while reducing bycatch, including protected species.

Significant management advances in the reduction of bycatch for the U.S. and Japanese longline fishing fleets have been made in recent years (Boggs 2004; Gilman et al 2005; Gilman et al 2006; Minami et al 2006; Yokota et al 2006), none of which were funded by the Pew Charitable Trust. These highly innovative management measures appear to have escaped the arguments of Pew as they campaign for President Bush' blue legacy. Without the advancement of such technology, the number and size of pelagic MPAs worldwide will be irrelevant.

Furthermore, the imposition of MPAs without any sound scientific justification is simply akin to drawing random shapes on a map and does nothing to actually improve stocks of HMS or protected species.

Finally, the advocacy-based attempt by Pew to justify their CNMI monument proposal, under a fisheries science veil, fails to address the various components, or ABCs, required to create a functional MPA:

a) Bottom up community management buy-in;

b) An iterative scientific approach to resource management;

c) An analysis of the fisheries stocks and ecosystem conditions and the level of threats facing each;

d) Identification of special life history aspects of each species that are sensitive to fishing pressure or anthropomorphic events (e.g. spawning aggregation areas);

e) Identification of specific objectives for the MPA and a procedure to measure whether these objectives are being achieved.

Michael Trianni
Capital Hill, Saipan

NISSAN

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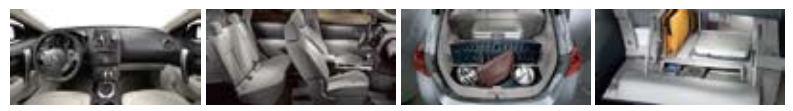

2007 MODELS CLEARANCE

NISSAN	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
Versa HB	#7L360734	Blue	$15,990.00
Versa S	#7L398849	White	$15,990.00
Frontier SE	#7C40890 SOLD	Silver	$26,990.00

KIA	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
Rio	#7629237 SOLD	White	$12,995.00
Sportage	#77354358	Jade	$17,695.00
Sorento	#6560698 SOLD	Green	$18,995.00

FORD	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
Ranger	#7PA3111 SOLD	White	$16,990.00
Fusion	#7R11485 SOLD	White	$19,990.00
Escape	#7KB29539	White	$19,990.00
F-150	#6NB857 SOLD	White	$21,990.00

HONDA	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
Fit	#7S03188 SOLD	Silver	$14,995.00
Fit Sport	#7S03110 SOLD	White	$16,495.00
Civic DX	#7L061948	White	$16,995.00
Ridgeline	#6H56662 SOLD	Silver	$29,990.00

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'A legacy truly worthy of the CNMI's children'

I am a proud Chamorro. I am proud of our history, both ancient and more recent. I am proud of our role in the Pacific World War II. I am proud of our progressive Constitution, one of only a handful worldwide that enshrines a traditional conservation ethic into law. And I am proud that the federal government wants to work with us to create the world's second largest marine monument in the waters surrounding our northernmost islands.

Our proud culture of conservation is enshrined in our Constitution, protecting our three northernmost islands. Although these islands are remote, increasing global pressure on fisheries, particularly in nearby Asia, do not make them immune to ecological and economic pressures. Add to the growing, global climate change, and it is clear that these island gems are not altogether safe from future management challenges.

Therefore, it only makes sense to extend those protections on land to the sea. The proposed monument is an opportunity to highlight and honor our traditions of conservation and sensible resource management. We need to engage legislators in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere and let them know how we want our monument protected. While we sit in the dark, while our tourists get stranded at the airport, now is not the time to complain about this historic opportunity to really put the CMNI on the map. The proposed monument will give us something to be proud of, something our children will thank us for. It is time for the people of CNMI, Chamorros and others, to stand up for our heritage and our future. Now is the time.

Let's get one thing straight. Right now, the folks in Washington, D.C. want to talk with us about this proposal. The new monument in the northwestern Hawaiian islands ensures that local people have an active voice in the management of the waters. It ensures that the research and tourism that take place in the monument benefit the people of Hawaii. We can have that here.

This is an historic opportunity. The proposed monument could bring hundreds of much needed jobs to the CNMI. It could make our islands a unique, international destination for tourists and marine researchers. It could significantly help our sagging economy.

Rather than hanging our head in shame as "Saipan, that little island with big power outages and corrupt politicians," we could walk with our heads held high. We would be lauded as the little islands that could. We could have an ongoing dialogue

See A LEGACY on Page 17

Listen to the voices of the youth

Saipan must be tired of hearing about CUC and the bad economy, but I think they need to hear from the children of the CNMI. We are Saipan's future, as they like to put it.

I have to say that, while I was sitting in my classroom at the end of the school year for my freshman year, I had no problems with the outages since they were at a consistent two-hour outage and nothing more. Now that we cannot rely on CUC's schedule at all, everyone cannot help but be angry. If CUC says that the outage will be from 1pm to 3pm, I'd like to believe it instead of having a surprise outage from 8pm to 12pm.

As much as we rotate feeders, why can't they turn the feeders off during decent hours when we still have daylight and wind? Children will start going outdoors and I'm sure everyone will be happier when they're healthier. As to when we have no power at night, everyone turns to restaurants and gorges themselves on food until we know for sure that we have power.

And why are all the engines suddenly down? Has CUC not been maintaining them properly for the past decade? Where is the money from the surcharges going? If it's fuel, then I do not see how they cannot have money left since there has been a 61-cent decline.

Another thing I'd like to ask our governor: Why are you so against federalization? It would greatly help since we are in so much debt. We cannot keep borrowing money out of this and I'm sure your plan is no better. People should swallow their pride and ask for help if they know they need it.

Brittany Sablan
As Lito, Saipan

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

IMPORTANT IMPORMATION ABOUT DRINKING WATER
August 2008 Tests Showed Coliform Bacteria in Saipan Water

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we did to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for drinking water contaminants. Throughout August 2008, we collected 102 water samples in Saipan to test for the presence of coliform bacteria with thirteen samples or 12.75% showing the presence of total coliform bacteria. The standard is that no more than five percent (5%) of samples may do so.

What should I do?

- **You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions.** However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.
- People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1 (800) 426-4791.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. Coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves. *Coliforms are bacteria which are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other; potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. Coliforms were found in more samples than allowed and this was a warning of potential problems.*

Usually, coliforms are a sign that there could be a problem with the system's treatment or distribution system (pipelines). Whenever we detect coliform bacteria in any sample, we do follow-up testing to see if other bacteria of greater concern, such as fecal coliform or *E. coli*, are present. We did find these bacteria in our subsequent testing, and further testing shows that this problem has been resolved.

What happened? What was done? Look below for the specific village or streets where problems occurred in August 2008:

- **As Lito:** (sample ID#15C, As Lito Dr.) Tests indicate that there were adequate chlorine levels in the water system; however, samples were collected during or within an hour of a power outage, the chlorine treatment did not have enough mixing or contact time within the distribution system. Chlorine treatment was increased for the disinfection process.
- **As Lito:** (sample ID#24B, As Lito Dr. and Msgr. Martinez Rd.) Tests indicate that there were adequate chlorine levels in the water system; however, samples were collected during or within an hour of a power outage, the chlorine treatment did not have enough mixing or contact time within the distribution system. Chlorine treatment increased for the disinfection process.
- **As Perdido:** (sample ID#29A, 29B, Aplok Dr.) Tests indicate that there were inadequate chlorine levels in the water system; however, samples were collected during or within an hour of a power outage, the chlorine treatment did not have enough mixing or contact time in the distribution system. Chlorine treatment increased for disinfections process.
- **As Perdido:** (sample ID#29A, 29B, 29C, Aplok Dr., As Perdido Rd., Afula Ln., Nuhot Ln.) Tests indicate that there were inadequate chlorine levels in the water system; however, samples were collected during or within an hour of a power outage, the chlorine treatment did not have enough mixing or contact time in the distribution system. Chlorine treatment increased for disinfections process.
- **Dandan Homestead:** (sample ID#35B, Birada St.) Tests indicate that there were adequate chlorine levels in the water system; however, samples were collected during or within an hour of a power outage, the chlorine treatment did not have enough mixing or contact time within the distribution system. Chlorine treatment increased for the disinfection process.
- **South San Vicente:** (sample ID#38B, Dandan Rd. and Kattan Hudda Dr.) Tests indicate that there were adequate chlorine levels in the water system; however, samples were collected during or within an hour of a power outage and from a non-24 hour water service, therefore, chlorine treatment did not have enough mixing or contact time in the distribution system. Chlorine treatment increased for the disinfection process.
- **Dandan:** (sample ID#21A, 21B, 21C, Msgr. Guerrero Rd., Msgr. Martinez Rd., Dahon Dr.) Treatment operators discovered a broken chlorinator supply hose connecting the gas chlorinator to the distribution line. This caused disruption to the treatment process, during which time the water serving this limited area did not receive adequate chlorine treatment. Water operators replaced the damaged chlorinator supply hose and flushed the lines until adequate chlorine treatment was detected throughout the distribution area. Repeat samples tests indicated the water to be free of both total coliform and E. coli. Chlorine treatment increased for the disinfection process.

For more information, please contact CUC Water Quality Laboratory Manager, Heidi Yelin at 322-5140 or via email at: cuclabman@yahoo.com or contact CUC Water Division Manager, Mariano Iglecias at 235-7025 or via email at: miglecias@cucgov.net

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Water Division
State Water System ID #: MP 0000001 Date Distributed: September 5, 2008

Joeten Motors Certified* USED CARS

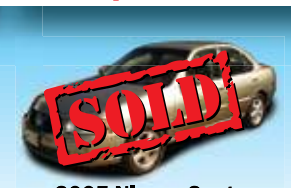
DEALS OF THE WEEK

2005 Kia Spectra
STOCK # 55151646
$9,995.00

2006 Honda Civic LX
STOCK # 6L009897
$17,995.00*

2004 Ford Explorer 4x4
STOCK # 4UB49237
$15,995.00

SOLD
1999 Volkswagon Beetle
STOCK # XM464684
$6,995.00*


SOLD
2005 Nissan Sentra
STOCK # 5L474083
$11,995.00*

SOLD
2005 Nissan Murano AWD
STOCK # 5W414457
$18,995.00

SOLD
1999 Toyota 4Runner 4x4
STOCK # X0221184
$9,995.00*

2005 Ford Mustang
STOCK # 55105436
$23,995.00

2005 Nissan Frontier 4x4
STOCK # 5C424207
$17,995.00

2005 Ford Ranger
STOCK # 5PA78255
$12,995.00*

2005 Nissan 350Z
STOCK # 5M654094
$22,995.00*

2005 Nissan Pathfinder SE 4x4
STOCK # 5C702102
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COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
State Board of Education
Public School System
P.O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BID
PSS IFB 08-032

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement of **Bottled Water and Delivery Services**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-032" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than September 26, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-032, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and three (3) copies). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan Babauta, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.

Contractors are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI business license.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting Procurement & Supply Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-035

The Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **MiniDV/HDV Camcorders and Accessories for Garapan Elementary School (GES)**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-035" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office, no later than **September 24, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-035" CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and three (3)-copies). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.**

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Public School System.

/S/ Dr. Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting Procurement & Supply Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP 08-025

The Public School System (PSS) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the **Purchase and Delivery of Mobility Equipped Vans.** Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "RFP #08-025" containing one (1) original and four (4) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than September 16, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "RFP #08-025, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and four (4)-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.

General inquiries may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 / 3035.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Ramon DLG. Diaz, Jr.
Acting, Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting P & S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Request for Proposal
RFP 08-026

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for the procurement of **Sign Language and Interpreting Services**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All proposals shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "RFP 08-026" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than September 18, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "RFP 08-026, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and one (1) copy). Any proposal after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan Babauta, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.**

Contractors are required to submit with their proposal, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

/s/ Rita A. Sablan
Commissioner of Education

/s/ Juan Babauta
Acting P & S Officer

An appeal to postpone start of classes

We parents would like to extend our portion of Sept. 3, 2008, letter to the editor titled "Outages and sleepy children" written by Ms. Emmy Rios from Tanapag, Saipan. We parents were captured and glad that a concerned parent actually felt the sufferings of her children as well as families in the CNMI affected by CUC's power outages. As many parents agree with Ms. Rios' concerns, the Board of Education members should critically look into this matter and pursue previous discussions of opening school one week later or Sept. 18, 2008. At least, by then, as already planned, CUC's power will be restored. The Board of Education's decision to open the school as scheduled on Sept. 8, 2008, will face more problems even before the first session is completed. Do we need more problems? With the current CUC power outages, children will not perform well or participate in their classroom studies as expected. Children will be restless, sleepy, and lack the concentration to learn. Besides, they are prone to lapses of attention and responsiveness, lack of motivation, and behavioral problems in the classroom. Do we need teachers, counselors, and even the principal to call parents in for parent-teacher conference because of our children's behavioral problems in the classroom?

The Board of Education members should be concerned about our students' needs and not let them suffer more in these times of needless sufferings. Just imagine what problems will arise, affecting student performance, participation, productivity, interest, and learning. This is not what we want our children to go through, especially when it comes to our children's' education. Whose voices are not heard here? It's the children. We as parents want our children to go to school to learn, not to suffer from a lack of concentration due to the lack of sleep at night. PSS Board members, as parents, we ask that you be compassionate to our *children's needs.*

According to most of the children we've spoken to, including our own children, they are unhappy with the recurring power outages as it becomes very hot and dark in their homes. As parents, we try to accommodate our children's needs *everytime* the power goes off but majority of homes in the CNMI are in the low income levels and don't have water tanks and generators. Lucky are those who don't have to suffer like most families do. Unfortunately, as parents, we can only do as much to take care of our *children's needs*. It's bad enough that when the power goes off, there's no water. So, how are the children supposed to prepare themselves in the morning for school? Of course, they need *water to shower, brush their teeth,* and *water to wash their hands* after breakfast. So, what do you think is best for our children?

We need the Board of Education to reconsider opening classes on Sept. 18, 2008, as previously proposed. More importantly, CUC's power has to be restored first before sending our children to school. As parents, we are also asking the support of the entire community of the CNMI, the Governor and Lt. Governor, and the elected officials to join with us and help our children, who are victims of needless suffering.

CUC's power outages are also the children's talk nowadays. It's the children's business, too. Just ask any child what major problems we are now suffering in the CNMI. In that, we'll leave you to their response.

In closing, we stand by our children to voice their concerns to the whole community and the government. So, everyone, let's come together and try the best we can to accommodate to our children's needs.

Mae Benavente-Salas,
San Antonio, Saipan
Rita Siren,
Koblerville, Saipan
Juanita Izawa,
Kagman, Saipan
Julita Sablan,
Chalan Kanoa, Saipan
Roman Reyes,
Kannat Tabla, Saipan
Bernie Pangelinan,
Kagman, Saipan
Winnie Taitano,
Tanapag, Saipan
Mark Flores,
Gualo Rai, Saipan
Martin Igitol,
Dandan, Saipan
Scott Pinaula,
Talafofo, Saipan
Emmy Rios,
Achugao, Saipan
Peter Camacho,
Kagman, Saipan
Ben Castro,
Kagman, Saipan
Tony Pangelinan,
Navy Hill, Saipan
Bernard Cruz,
Chalan Kanoa, Saipan
Glen Sablan,
Chalan Kiya, Saipan

A LEGACY

From Page 15

with Washington, D.C. about what we want our monument to look like. We could be known as a world leader in marine conservation. We could be known as an international hotspot for marine research. And we could revive our struggling tourism industry.

The proposed marine monument would truly be a legacy worthy of our children. It would continue our time-honored traditions of conservation and sustainable management. It would be a source of pride, a place of learning, and international example of modern marine management. This is not the time for pointless posturing and infighting. It is the time to do right by our children, and by our heritage. The choice is ours.

Andrew Sablan Salas
Susupe, Saipan

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2*6*14 Utility regular	$7.90	2*6*14 Utility treated	$12.20
2*6*16 Utility regular	$8.90	2*6*16 Utility treated	$14.20
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Fax. (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Bank of Guam

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM, Plaintiff, vs. BENIGNO T. FEJERAN, Defendant.

Civil Action No. 07-0230

NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on July 11, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in the following property, Lot 031 T 03, located on the island of Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 26,244 square meters, more or less, as shown on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 031 T 00, which was recorded on October 22, 1976, as Document No. 5640, at Land Registry office in Saipan, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on October 3, 2008, at the hour of 1:30 pm, at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public and will be held in reserve.

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. Rights and duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:

a) withdraw the property listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted.

b) To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and

c) To reject any and all bids.

2. Bids. Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in the notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the property. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, PO Box 503758 CK, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 670-234-7859; Fax: 670-234-5749.

3. Deposit; Payment. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the 10% deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the property will revert to the Bank of Guam.

4. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct an enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at die commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.

5. Inspection and No Warranty. Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property; contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty, Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

DATED this 12th day of August 2008.

/s/ Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-037

The Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **Laptop Computer Systems and Accessories for Marianas High School (MHS)**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-037" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office, no later than **October 02, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-037" CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and three (3)-copies). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.**

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Procurement & Supply Officer

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
State Board of Education
Public School System
P.O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BID
PSS IFB 08-033

The Public School System (PSS) and the State Board of Education are soliciting for competitive sealed biddings for a **One (1) Year Janitorial Services for the PSS Central Offices**. Interested firms are to provide labor, materials and supplies for janitorial services. Detailed information on the Scope of Work are available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office situated on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All Bid Proposals must be in a sealed envelope face marked **"IFB # 08-033"** and submitted one (1) original with three (3) copies to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office situated on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **September 19, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsive and Responsible Determination documents must be put in a different envelope marked **"IFB# 08-033, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsive & Responsible Determination"** (I -original with three 3-copies). Any bids after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Any questions must be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, PSS Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer, at fax # (670). 664-3791 or email to *babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.* Questions must be submitted no later than ten (10) working days prior to the deadline to submit the proposals.

The bidders are requested to submit with their proposal a copy of their valid CNMI Business License to conduct Janitorial Services (Labor, Supply, Maintenance & Services) in the CNMI.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all proposals if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

Inquiries to this proposal announcement may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone number 237-3062 or 3035 or faxed to 664-3791.

/S/ Ramon DLG. Diaz, Jr.
Acting, Commisioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
PSS Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SSHS freshman orientation set

Saipan Southern High School Freshman Orientation for all new incoming students will be this Friday, at 9 am to 11am in the school's cafeteria. This also includes any students transferring from a private school, a school off island, or from any Public School (this includes all grades 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th). Parents are asked to accompany the student to the orientation. ***(PR)***

THS PTSA meeting set

The Tinian High School PTSA will have a meeting on Thursday, Sept. 11, 2008, at 7pm, in the THS school cafeteria. We are encouraging all parents/legal guardians' to attend this first meeting of the School Year 2008-2009. Call 237-4165 for any questions. ***(PR)***

Japan exchange program deadline set

Saipan Mayor Juan B.Tudela wished to inform all parents who are interested to send their children to Japan in October for the KSKK program under the Student Cultural Exchange that the deadline to submit all applications will be today, Sept. 5, 2008, no later than 4pm.

All applications must be submitted to the Saipan Mayor's Office during regular working hours from 7:30am to 11:30am and from 12:30pm to 4:30pm. Call or come to the Saipan Mayor's Office and ask for Jemalyn Tenorio for details. ***(PR)***

MHS calendar of activities

Sept. 4 - 5 State level Professional Development days

Sept. 8 First Day of School. Students report to Homeroom at 7:50am. Refer to Homeroom Listing in school bulletin board (Bldg A). Homeroom List will be posted on Sept. 2 for advance viewing by students/parents. Class schedules will be distributed on the first day of school. For questions and concerns, contact 237-3206. ***(PR)***

Parent orientation at SAES

San Antonio Elementary School would like to inform the public that parent orientation for the following grade levels will be as follows:

Sept. 8 (Monday)
- 4th Graders—4pm -5pm
- 5th Graders—5pm - 6pm
- 6th Graders—6pm - 7pm

Sept. 9 (Tuesday)
- 1st Graders—4pm - 5pm
- 2nd Graders—5pm - 6pm
- 3rd Graders—6pm - 7pm

"The orientation will be in each respective classroom. We would like to ask all the parents to be present to receive important information that will be given out by each classroom teacher," school officials said in a statement. ***(PR)***

KHS calendar of activities

Sept. 2-5 All student class schedules will be released at the school site from 8:30am to 3:30pm

Sept. 8 Classes begin

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Eleventh CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Special Board Meeting on Saturday, September 6, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the BOE Conference Room, 2nd Floor, NMI Retirement Fund Bldg., Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes
  - i. January 19, 2008 Minutes

II. Public Comments[1]

III. Reports
- a. Chair
- b. Board Committees
  - i. CIA
  - ii. CIP
  - iii. FPA & Special Education & Early Childhood
  - iv. LIA
  - v. School Reform
  - vi. Private Schools & Non-Public School Representative
- c. Commissioner of Education

IV. Old Business
- a. Annual Leave Amendment

V. New Business
- a. Post-Trial Issues: Century Insurance v. Guerrero Bros., CDA, PSS

VI. Executive Session[2]
- a. Legal Updates: Century Insurance v. Guerrero Bros., CDA, PSS
- b. Troops to Teachers Program contract issues
- c. Personnel
- d. Other matters

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting

IX. Adjournment

[1] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

SCC to school businesses in emergency preparedness

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for a workshop aimed at preparing local businesses for potential emergencies in the spirit of CNMI Disaster Preparedness Month.

The workshop—to be held at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe today—will include talks on key issues like business insurance and safeguarding computers in an emergency, among others.

"This is a great way to get your businesses in line to help get them back online in the event of a disaster," said Chamber president James Arenovski.

The workshop comes after Gov. Benigno Fitial on Aug. 29 proclaimed September as CNMI Disaster Preparedness Month, mirroring the national Emergency Preparedness Month marked each year in the United States.

"Disasters severely affecting vulnerable communities continue throughout the world," Fitial said in his proclamation. "And as the earth becomes more populated, these disasters affect increasing numbers of people. Located in a "typhoon alley," the CNMI has been particularly vulnerable to the devastation of typhoons and floods."

In an interview, consultant Ken Shankweiler, who is speaking at the workshop, said the event marks the kickoff of a larger effort to lay the groundwork for a "public-private partnership" between the business community and the government to prepare the CNMI for potential disasters.

"Businesses need to be more involved in preparedness planning," Shankweiler said, adding the effort will help to identify resources in the private sector that the community can use when responding to emergencies.

The event will begin at 10am and continue until noon.

Workshop on livestock opportunities

In partnership with the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service will be hosting a free Alternative Livetstock Enterprise/WSARE workshop to explore and propose some livestock opportunities applicable to the current CNMI economy. Facilitators will showcase low input/high output and low-maintenance operation strategies.

The workshops will be held on Saipan on Sep. 10 in the NMC-CREES Conference Room, Rota on Sept. 12 in Room B of the NMC-Rota campus, and Tinian on Sept. 16 in Room D of the NMC-Tinian campus. All three sessions will run from 9am to 12pm.

Those individuals interested in attending the workshops are advised to register beforehand as seating is limited for all three sessions. Those who want to find out more information about the workshops can call the following numbers: 234-5498 ext. 1708 (Saipan), 433-0657 (Tinian), or 532-9513 (Rota). ***(NMC)***

New Law Expands Access to
NMC's Upward Bound Program

What's New About Upward Bound?

On August 14, 2008, President George W. Bush signed into law the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which strengthens the Higher Education Act of 1965 by introducing sweeping, positive changes to the Upward Bound program under the Division of Student Services located at Northern Marianas College.

One of the major changes includes the expanded access to Upward Bound program for many CNMI students. The program can now accept applications from students who are incoming high school freshmen, sophomore and juniors for school year 2008-2009 (previously, the program only accepted incoming freshmen).

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE NMC 1981

TRiO UPWARD BOUND

What Services Does Upward Bound Offer?

- Instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and other subjects necessary for success in education beyond high school
- Academic, financial and personal counseling
- Exposure to academic programs and cultural events
- Tutorial and mentoring services
- Information on postsecondary education opportunities
- Assistance in completing college admissions and financial aid applications
- Assistance with college placement tests

What Do Upward Bound Students Do?

- Receive tutoring with their high school studies
- Mentor fellow students
- Participate in a six-week summer enrichment program
- Recreational Activities (swimming, baseball, basketball, table tennis, volleyball, etc.)
- Career Exploration Activities (mentoring, guest speakers, workshops, and business tours)
- Attend seminars (college information and orientation, study skills development, drug awareness and prevention)
- Go on Field Trips (take occasional on-island fieldtrips that will strengthen the academic content of the courses taken during the summer/academic year.)
- Cultural Awareness Activities (cultural understanding, appreciation and awareness, fieldtrips, guest speakers, workshops, training in local arts and crafts.)

For more information, please contact our counselors Ms. Jane Tudela and Ms. Zenaida Javier at 234-5498 extensions 1283 and 1280, respectively, or stop by our office located on the NMC Campus at Building J (next to the Student Center). On Rota, please call Mr. Frank Norita at 532-0267. On Tinian, please call Mr. James San Nicolas at 433-9494.

Marian C. Tudela, Director, Upward Bound Program

Advertisement is paid for with federal funds made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, TRiO Programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

AiG Ministry to send medical team to Saipan

AiG Wordwide will be sending its Ministry-Medical Team to Saipan this month, marking the first time it will be deployed in the region.

"Please be in prayer as our Saipan Ministry-Medical Team prepares to leave the Cincinnati Airport on Sept. 12. This is the very first such team that AiG WorldWide has sent to the mission field," said AiG Worldwide director Dr. David Crandall.

He added Dr. Tommy Mitchell and his doctor wife, Elizabeth, along with staff member Laura Perrien, will represent AiG WorldWide on Saipan for 16 days of medical ministry and teaching ministry.

"The Mitchells will use their medical skills to treat pastors who have never seen a doctor, and local clinics will be organized to meet the needs of the local people and teach them the truths of God's Word. Laura will assist the team in organization and in minor medical areas along with Drs. Mitchell. She will also teach English as a second language and teach both in the Christian school and college," said Crandall.

The Ministry-Medical Team will be on Saipan from Sept. 13 to 27 and medical care will be extended daily from Sept. 15 to 26, 8am-5pm, at the school's campus along Middle Road in Gualo Rai.

Those interested are requested to call Eucon at 234-3203 or 234-3207 to make an appointment.

Dr. Mitchell will also speak to all of the international students daily at Eucon International School and College and speak at the church fellowship on several occasions.

"The footprint of WorldWide continues to increase its global impact with the message of biblical authority and creation presented through this unique ministry of medicine and outreach," said Crandall. ***(PR)***

Animals up for adoption

PAWS has some special animals that are available for adoption or fostering.

Apollo:

Apollo, the dog who had a bucket stuck on his head for five or more days, is still available for adoption to a responsible and loving home.

He is a male boonie dog, red in color, who is thought to be about one year of age. He has been de-wormed, vaccinated, and treated for mange.

PAWS would like to find Apollo a responsible family that will ensure that he continues to receive proper care for the rest of his life.

"This guy has had a rough start, so we would like to place him a home that will care for him until the day he dies a natural death of old age," said PAWS president Katie Busenkell.

Apollo is currently in the care of a foster home that has reported he likes the company of humans and/or other animals, and that he shows no signs of aggression.

"Apollo's temperament is perfect for a companion dog. He is not aggressive or overly protective, and therefore he would not make a good guard dog."

If you are interested in meeting Apollo, contact PAWS at 285-PAWS.

Puppies:

A litter of six puppies was rescued over the weekend by some caring PAWS members. They are approximately 4-5 weeks old and are of mixed colors and sexes. One of the puppies is spoken for as of this press release, so five are still available for adoption.

PAWS is looking for responsible owners who would like to make one of these cuties a member of their family. They will need worming and shots, but are in good health and have beautiful coats.

For more information, contact Paradise Island Animal Hospital at 234-9669 where the puppies are currently being boarded.

PAWS also has four brown and tan puppies that are approximately seven weeks old up for adoption. They are well socialized and come when called. There are two male and two female. They are weaned and have had their first worming. They are currently being treated for ringworm, with a simple-to- use topical spray medication. This will need to be continued for the next 2-4 weeks.

PAWS is again looking for responsible families that can give these puppies the TLC and continued medical care they need. Call Rose Callier at 285-0408 regarding these puppies.

If you are interested in adopting a rescue at any time, contact PAWS on its hotline at 285-PAWS or visit its website at www.paws-saipan.org, or its blog at http://paws-saipan.blogspot.com for photos and information of animals it currently has available. ***(PAWS)***

Early election results indicate Vanuatu upsets

Longtime politicians Jimmy, Sope appear out

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—One of Vanuatu's longest serving politicians, who appears to have lost his seat in the country's elections, says the people have spoken.

The country voted on Tuesday local time to elect members to its 52 seat parliament, but it will be some days before official results are released.

Early unofficial results suggest that Willie Jimmy, the serving minister of finance, who has been an MP for more than 20 years, has been ousted.

He says there's a mood for change, especially amongst the youth, and he hopes it will benefit Vanuatu.

"The will of the people has spoken, the judges have made their decisions, and I believe that the decision that was taken by the people was fair, because of democracy that we believe in, and that's how it stands, and we stand by it."

Willy Jimmy says the move by his party, the National United Party, to stand 2 candidates in the Port Vila constituency was his downfall, because it split the vote.

Meanwhile, other unofficial results suggest another veteran, former Prime Minister, Barak Sope has also lost his seat.

While results are continuing to come in, independent candidate Ralph Regenvanu appears to have won the most votes in the Port Vila constituency, which elects 6 MPs overall.

The leader of the Green confederation, Moana Carcasses, and the head of the Vanuatu republican party, Maxime Carlot Korman have been returned in the capital, along with the sitting deputy Prime Minister, Edward Natapei.

However, other results fr outer provinces are still coming through and an official count won't begin until all the ballot boxes have been returned to Port Vila.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Dengue outbreak worries Fiji health officials

SUVA, Fiji (Fiji Times/PIR)—Medical authorities have confirmed a national dengue fever outbreak exists. Sources close to the Health Ministry said divisional teams had been activated after a marked increase in cases reported at hospitals and health centers throughout the country. It is understood that more than four cases of dengue per day have been reported at public and private health facilities over the past few weeks. Interim Health Minister Dr. Jiko Luveni said as of Friday, 53 suspected cases of dengue had been reported throughout Fiji. According to Pacific Islands Report records, ten Pacific nations have reported dengue outbreaks this year: Tonga, French Polynesia, Yap, Samoa, Fiji, Cook Islands, Palau, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Kiribati. Of particular concern are New Caledonia, which has reported 900 cases so far this year, and Kiribati, where 300 cases are on record in 2008.

Marshalls College enrollment up 24 percent

HONOLULU (Pacific Islands Report/PIR)—The Marshall Islands Journal reports that enrollment at the College of the Marshall Islands has jumped 24 percent this year. The school reported a total of 688 students enrolled this year compared with 557 last year, according to the Journal. Wilson Hess, President of the college, was quoted as saying the key to the increase has been a 10 percent retention rate. The improved enrollment is reportedly the highest since the early 2000s, when the college operated a second campus at Gugeegue Island in Kwajalein Atoll. The college has been under scrutiny by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges – which accredits schools in the region – since 2003, for deficiencies at its Majuro campus. The college has since made corrections but remains on "Warning" status.

Kemakeza jail sentence increased to six months

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—Solomon Islands Chief Justice Sir Albert Palmer has sentenced former Prime Minister and current Minister for Forests Allan Kemakeza to six months jail. The Chief Justice sentenced Allan for 18 months in jail but suspended two thirds of the sentence. This means Allan will lose his parliamentary seat and a by-election in his Savo-Russells constituency. Allan was initially sentenced by the Magistrate's Court last December for a two months jail term, but the Director of Public Prosecution cross appealed, saying this was inadequate. Allan was convicted of demanding with menaces, intimidation and larceny for authorizing militants to raid and seize the vehicles of law firm, Sol-Law Services, while he was Prime Minister in 2002.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The KBS crew films a sequence at the Saipan World Resort grounds.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cast and crew have a go at local delicacies and cuisine.

New Korean reality TV show films on Saipan

The Korean Broadcasting System is on Saipan filming a new segment for its "Happy Sunday" program, which is a very popular two-hour weekend entertainment show airing on Sundays from 6pm to 8pm.

KBS is the largest national TV network in Korea and "Happy Sunday" enjoys a viewership of approximately 15 million people.

"Happy Sunday" is launching a new program called "Single-Single" which is a celebrity mock-dating reality show and will be filming the first episode in Saipan. "Single-Single" show hosts are a very popular comedian/singer duo named "Country KkoKko (Jung-Hwan Shin and Jae-Hoon Tak). In addition, five actors and five actresses will be filming on Saipan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The KBS crew films a scene with some residents on Saipan.

Filming will consist of water sports and activities, couple games at Saipan Word Resort's water park, cultural experiences, beach dates, island tours, a dance contest, a bottom-fishing tour, a monster truck jungle tour and a spa experience on Saipan.

The show will air on Sept. 21 and 28 as well as Oct. 5 and 12 and has an estimated value of $2 million to the CNMI.

The Marianas Visitors Authority acknowledged its members for their support to make this TV coverage happen. They include Saipan World Resort, Tasi Tours, K.P.S. Corporation, KTAS & Mode Tour, Bonita Park, DPS, Mariana Resort & Spa and Micronesia Handicraft.

"We look forward to having Saipan featured on KBS in Korea," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "Our Korean arrivals continue to be strong and with the opportunity for TV exposure in Korea to such a large audience we look forward to the positive brand recognition that the program will bring to our destination." ***(MVA)***

Pacific people need better food security

APIA, Samoa—A key Pacific regional organization says Pacific people are facing serious challenges to their food security, and need to be more self-reliant.

Global fuel and food crises are affecting Pacific island people, who are very susceptible to global economic downturns, said Aleki Sisifa, director of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Land Resources Division.

He was speaking at the opening yesterday of the Third Heads of Agriculture and Forestry meeting in Apia, Samoa. The theme for the meeting is "Food security, nutritional balance and sustainable management of natural resources."

"The genetic resources for food and agriculture we have depended on for generations have been eroded over the years, a situation that may be made worse by climate change. We need to sign up to the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, so that we can access a wider pool of diversity and share genetic resources.

"Having adequate and secure access to customary land for development, and ensuring sustainable land use, have become more urgent with the need for increased pace of economic growth," Sisifa said. Land reform is among the subjects for discussion at the meeting.

He also said more attention had to be paid to the close relationship between the agriculture and forestry sectors and health. Non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, were afflicting Pacific people in epidemic proportions, partly because of a reliance on imported processed food rather than more nutritious local foods.

The demand to provide alternative fuels was competing with food production, including competition for productive land.

The outcomes of the Heads of Agriculture meeting, which is organized by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, will go before a meeting of Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry in Apia next week. The Ministers, who will meet on Sept. 8 and 9, will also consider a new integrated strategic plan for the 2009-2012 period for SPC's Land Resources Division.

Cost of living affects Pacific food security

Food security has become a major concern in the Pacific region, says Samoa's Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Taua Tavaga Kitiona Seuala.

"The cost of living is skyrocketing, triggered by the adverse impacts of climate change and a significant increase in the price of fossil fuels.

"We should be prepared to meet the challenges so that we can continue to live in relative comfort, given such difficult circumstances.

"In the practical field, the environmental stresses plaguing the farming community need to be managed," he said, adding that farmers would need to adapt their farming practices to be more resilient.

Taua was speaking at the opening of the Third Heads of Agriculture and Forestry meeting attended by Pacific delegates in Apia.

The Pacific region needed to be proactive in developing strategies to ensure its self-sufficiency in future he said. The Minister also supported efforts to strengthen sustainable resource use, protect and share genetic diversity and improve biosecurity and trade facilitation. ***(SPC)***

Ada is MVA's Employee of the Quarter

The Marianas Visitors Authority recently selected David V. Ada Jr. as the recipient of the Employee of the Quarter award.

Ada, an employee of MVA since February 1997, is currently a Statistics Specialist for the Research Division.

He was recognized for his support and assistance in ensuring smooth operation within the division and was recognized for his ability to perform his duties with minimal supervision. Ada was also recognized as a team player both within his division as well as with other divisions within MVA.

As the employee of the quarter, Ada received a certificate of recognition, a parking spot and $100.

"As a manager, it makes my job easier to know that I have a division staffed with competent employees. Their ability to complete the data collection and generation is important to the MVA and its partners," stated deputy managing director Judy Torres. "Dave has displayed initiative to update other statistical information such as flight information, hotel information, historical and statistical data."

Ada contributes to the preparation of monthly reports that provide important information on the CNMI's tourism industry. Both the public and private sector use this report locally and internationally.

"The hard work put into his daily tasks provides accurate data, integrity and information on a timely manner," said Torres.

This is not the first time Ada was recognized at MVA for this award.

"He was our employee of the quarter in August 2005 and then our employee of the year in May 2006. As an employee of MVA, he displays a positive attitude and is always willing to help others. This shows that he is a true team player," said Polly Deleon Guerrero, MVA's personnel manager.

MVA offers an incentive for individual motivation toward providing quality service, increasing productivity, job knowledge and skills. The program recognizes outstanding performance and employee contribution toward meeting MVA's goals and objectives. ***(MVA)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

David V. Ada Jr., center, smiles in a group photo as the Employee of the Quarter. Presenting the certificate is MVA's deputy managing director, Judy Torres.

Island Snapshots

IMMIGRATION FORUM

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A nonresident worker reads a document presented by Lawyer Nelson J. Xu of the Guam-based L.A. Baumann & Associates during a forum on CNMI Immigration Reform and Non-Immigrant Visa at Saipan Community Church in Susupe Saturday afternoon.

AIRPORT-BOUND

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Northwest Airlines and Continental Airlines aircraft taxi toward Tokyo's Narita Airport.

NEW POSTMASTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial poses with the CNMI's new postmaster, Hector Medina. Fitial joined the U.S. Postal Service, Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, and community members in welcoming Saipan's new Postmaster on Wednesday.

SWEARING IN

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial swears in Manny P. Villagomez of Tinian and Barry C. Toves of Rota as the two newest members of the Commonwealth Ports Authority's board of directors Wednesday morning. Fitial convened the CPA board after swearing in the two additional board members. CPA now has six board members: Benigno M. Sablan, Fermin Sakisat, Thomas Villagomez, Toves, Villagomez, and Joe Lifoifoi. The seventh board member, Margarita Praeter, is still awaiting Senate confirmation. The new CPA chair is Lifoifoi.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY GIRL

Happy second birthday to our precious princess, Franishia Jolie Attao Babauta, who is celebrating her birthday today, Sept. 5. "We love you and may you have many more birthdays to come." Lots of love, hugs and kisses from Daddy and Mommy.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ACCIDENT

A Commonwealth Utilities Corp. personnel removes the upper part of an electric pole that was cut in half after a white Toyota Sienna slammed into it along Middle Road Monday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

'GIVE US WATER'

KRISTI EATON

Koblerville resident David Lizama stands beside the sign he constructed last week after he said his family went without water for nearly a week. His children, Davlyn, Roshelle and Dave, surround him.

Business

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA
5,041.70
Down 88.80
(-1.73%)

HONG KONG
20,420.45
Down 164.61
(-0.80 %)

JAKARTA
2,070.7361
Down 45.2639
(-2.14%)

TOKYO
12,553.16
Down 136.43
(-1.08%)

K. LUMPUR
1,085.38
Down 1.61
(-0.15%)

MANILA
2,754.05
Up 4.02
(+0.15%)

SINGAPORE
2,655.04
Down 51.49
(-1.90%)

SEOUL
1,424.98
Down 1.91
(-0.13%)

BANGKOK
646.58
Down 3.35
(-0.52%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
11,532.88
+15.96

NASDAQ
2,333.73
-15.51

S&P
1,274.98
0.00

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.2019
British Pound	0.5634
Canadian Dollar	1.0619
Chinese Renminbi	6.8374
Euro	0.6903
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8086
Indian Rupee	44.4150
Indonesian Rupiah	9,205.0000
Japanese Yen	108.1500
Malaysian Ringgit	3.4335
New Zealand Dollar	1.4686
Philippine Peso	46.6750
Singapore Dollar	1.4319
South Korean Won	1,128.1500
Swiss Franc	1.1059
Taiwan Dollar	31.8300
Thailand Baht	34.4300

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Oil prices slightly lower on stronger dollar

NEW YORK (AP)—Oil prices inched lower Wednesday as a stronger dollar and slowing demand for crude overshadowed an almost total shutdown of energy output in the Gulf of Mexico after the passage of Hurricane Gustav.

Light, sweet crude for October delivery fell 36 cents to settle at $109.35 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, after earlier dipping as low as $107.22.

At the pump, a gallon of regular fell to a new national average of $3.681. That's less than half a penny lower than Tuesday's average and more than 10 percent off the all-time record of $4.114 set July 17.

On Wednesday, about 96 percent of oil production in the Gulf and about 92 percent of natural gas output remained shut down after Gustav, according to the U.S. Minerals Management Service, as energy firms assessed platforms, rigs and pipelines and worked to redeploy evacuated workers. The Gulf area is home to a quarter of U.S. oil production and 40 percent of refining capacity. Some oil companies in the western Gulf whose equipment wasn't in the path of the storm began ramping up operations Wednesday.

Phil Flynn, energy analyst at Alaron Trading Corp. in Chicago, said crude's inability to rally on the shutdown highlights the bearish sentiment that has gripped energy markets in recent weeks.

"People are starting to realize that if we can't rally oil with a 100 percent shutdown then this oil run is probably done," Flynn said.

Crude has dropped about $40, or 26 percent, since surging to a record $147.27 a barrel on July 11, weighed down as a U.S. economic slowdown spreads overseas and curbs demand for petroleum products.

Oil steady in Asia ahead of US inventory report

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices were steady Thursday in Asia above $109 a barrel as investors waited for a weekly U.S. crude inventory report for evidence that slowing economic growth has cut demand.

Light, sweet crude for October delivery was up 19 cents to $109.54 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange midday in Singapore. The contract overnight fell 36 cents to settle at $109.35.

The U.S. Energy Department's Energy Information Administration is scheduled to release its report on U.S. oil stocks for the week ended Aug. 29 later in the day. The petroleum supply report was expected to show that oil stocks rose by 500,000 barrels, according to the average of analysts' estimates in a survey by energy information provider Platts.

The Platts survey also showed that analysts projected gasoline inventories fell 1.8 million barrels and distillates went up 1.1 million barrels during last week.

"I expect the U.S. numbers to show oil demand is weakening," said Tetsu Emori, commodity markets fund manager at ASTMAZ Futures Co. in Tokyo. "The impact from Gustav will be seen in next week's numbers."

Energy output in the Gulf of Mexico began to slowly come back online after the passage of Hurricane Gustav. Some oil companies in the western Gulf whose equipment wasn't in the path of the storm began ramping up operations Wednesday.

However, about 96 percent of oil production in the Gulf and about 92 percent of natural gas output remained shut down on Wednesday, according to the U.S. Minerals Management Service, as energy firms assessed platforms, rigs and pipelines and worked to redeploy evacuated workers. The Gulf area is home to a quarter of U.S. oil production and 40 percent of refining capacity.

AP

Customers line up to get gasoline at a Shell station in Gretna, La., on Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008.

August auto sales fall; some say worst may be over

DETROIT (AP)—Nearly every major automaker saw its U.S. sales drop in August, but many are seeing signs that the worst slump in recent history may have bottomed out.

Most upbeat were executives from General Motors Corp., which posted a 20.3 percent sales decline from a year ago but a 31 percent improvement over July's totals.

Much of the gain came from offering all buyers employee discounts on many models, but Mark LaNeve, GM's vice president of North American sales, said there's hope that June and July were the trough for U.S. sales.

"We are very encouraged by what we saw in August. It gives us reason to think that we are starting to pull our way out of this," he said Wednesday in a conference call with reporters and industry analysts.

Overall, U.S. sales fell 15.5 percent compared with August of last year but rose 10 percent from July's dismal figures, according to Autodata Corp. The seasonally adjusted annual sales rate for August was 13.7 million, up from 12.5 million in July, the worst month in 16 years.

Chrysler LLC said its U.S. sales fell more than 34 percent last month, while Ford Motor Co. reported a 26.5 percent decline. Toyota Motor Corp.'s sales dipped 9.4 percent, and Honda Motor Co. saw a 7.3 percent slide.

Nissan Motor Co. was the only major automaker to report an increase over August 2007: Its sales climbed 13.6 percent.

AP

Unsold 2008 Denalis sit at a GMC Truck dealership in the south Denver suburb of Littleton, Colo., on Sunday, Aug. 17, 2008.

Boeing workers back strike; pact extended 2 more days

SEATTLE (AP)—Boeing Co. aircraft assembly workers voted overwhelming to reject the company's contract offer and strike for an unprecedented second time in three years.

Their walkout was set to begin at 12:01 a.m. PDT Thursday but was put on hold after their expiring contract—covering more than 27,000 workers—was extended 48 hours at the request of Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire and a federal mediator.

Machinists District Lodge 751 President Tom Wroblewski and chief machinists' negotiator Mark Blondin said, however, that if Boeing doesn't come back with an acceptable deal within 48 hours, the strike is on.

The vote late Wednesday was 87 percent in favor of a strike as unanimously recommended by machinists union negotiators. Under union rules a strike requires at least two-thirds support from those voting.

In separate balloting, union members also voted 80 percent to reject Boeing's third and final three-year contract offer, which included pay raises averaging 11 percent.

Boeing's three-year "best and final" offer included bonuses totaling at least $5,000, raises averaging 11 percent, pension increases and a 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment—$34,000 in average pay and benefit gains per employee, according to the company.

Study: Workers to pay more for health care

NEW YORK (AP)—Get ready for another hike in copays and deductibles.

A survey being released Thursday by the Mercer consulting firm found 59 percent of companies intend to keep down rising health care costs in 2009 by raising workers' deductibles, copays or out-of-pocket spending limits.

On average, health care costs will go up by an estimated 5.7 percent next year for both workers and their employers, the study found. That repeats this year's 5.7 percent hike and a 6.1 percent jump in 2007.

The growth of health care costs has hovered at around 6 percent since 2005, according to Mercer. While that's down from the double-digit growth in previous years, it's still moving at a faster clip than inflation or workers wages.

"It's not something to cheer about, especially since costs are getting passed on to employees," said Blaine Bos, author of the survey.

The results were preliminary findings, with about half of the 3,000 large companies surveyed reporting. Preliminary findings for the annual survey have historically been in line with final results.

Between 2003 and 2007, the average deductible for an individual grew from $250 to $400. For a family, it rose from $1,000 to $1,500, according to Mercer.

Deductibles are the amount workers pay for medical care out of pocket. Once workers spend that amount, they begin sharing costs with employers, with the company covering an average of 80 percent.

Graduates' job hunts: Majorly frustrating

By NANCY TREJOS
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Thomas Rumeau already had a bachelor's degree in economics but decided that a master's in public policy would make him more marketable.

Three months after earning that master's from the University of Maryland, he still hasn't found a job in his field and is settling for part-time work at the university's career center. Thirty years old and married with a baby on the way, he is working alongside undergraduates nearly 10 years younger.

Since February, he has applied for about 60 positions as a researcher or analyst for the federal government, the state government, nonprofit organizations, private companies, associations—anyplace he can think of.

"I didn't think it would take this long," Rumeau said. "It's even hard just to get an interview."

Rumeau is a victim of bad timing. During robust economic times, college students in undergraduate and graduate school programs would easily get multiple offers. As the economy teeters on the edge of recession, college graduates this year face a tough job market, leaving many without work in their fields or doing jobs that people without college degrees can do, career center officials said. Most affected, the officials said, are those looking to break into the financial services industry, hard hit by the subprime mortgage crisis.

The numbers aren't pretty. Unemployment among 20- to 24-year-olds, the typical post-undergraduate age group, is sharply higher than the overall population. In the second quarter of this year, joblessness among this group reached 9.8 percent, according to the Labor Department. That is up from 7.7 percent last year at this time and 8.1 percent in the second quarter of 2001, about the time the last recession hit. Overall, unemployment rose to 5.7 percent in July from 5.5 percent the previous month, and the economy lost 51,000 payroll jobs.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers said employers offered higher starting salaries this year. That said, the increase in hiring recent college grads, especially in the financial services industry, has dropped considerably. Employers were expected to increase hiring 8 percent for the class of 2008, sharply below the 17.4 percent surge for the class of 2007.

"We're trying to get them thinking about and planning for Plan B and Plan C in the event their first choice is not available," said Jeannette Frett, assistant dean and director of MBA career management at Georgetown University.

The most desirable job candidates, career center officials and recruiters said, are those with engineering, information technology, math and science degrees. The job market in industries such as health care, information technology, accounting and biotechnology remains strong. There are also geographic differences. The federal government and trade associations provide many opportunities in the Washington area, but other parts of the country are struggling more, career center directors and recruiters said.

Michael Stearns, 30, is hoping his Plan A will still pan out. A recent graduate of Georgetown's MBA program, he has been searching for a management consulting or marketing job since last year. He has applied to about 50 companies in Boston, New York and all over the West Coast.

"The first semester, the economy was still good. Jobs were aplenty. I didn't think there would be problems," he said. "But as soon as 2008 hit, the economy took a big downturn, and the jobs dried up. From last year to this year, it's changed quite a bit, and it's definitely been more difficult than I had anticipated."

That's about the time that Helen Stefan Moreau, president of the Midtown Group, a hiring agency in Washington, noticed a shift, with several law firms, financial services companies and nonprofit organizations instituting hiring freezes. Many freezes have been lifted and jobs are available, she said, but applicants still have to be a lot more competitive these days.

"This market is one that just really needs to be navigated," she said. "It's not like the old days where someone could pop a resume out there and get 15 interviews and five offers. You have to seek out opportunities more than in the past. In the past, they were coming to you."

The Economic Policy Institute, a nonprofit think tank in Washington, found that college graduates might not be better off in other ways. After analyzing figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the institute found that there was a five percentage point decrease since 2001 in college graduates getting health insurance coverage. Fewer than half of young college graduates receive any form of pension coverage, the institute reported.

"Having a college degree is not the guarantee of a good job with benefits the way it used to be," said Lawrence Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute. "And college graduates are now being affected by the kind of squeeze being put on the middle class and blue-collar workers for a long time."

Paul Harrington, an economist at Northeastern University, also found that about 38 percent of young college graduates are "underemployed," or doing work for which they are overqualified.

"It's a loss of resources. It's a social loss. These are bright people who could be engaged in more productive activities but ... we haven't figured out how to move them into productive activities," he said. "That's the tragedy of a recession."

Triston McIntyre, a 23-year-old English and political science major at the University of Maryland, decided to take a more creative route to employment when he graduates this fall. He started his own business, partnering with a fellow blogger to create a Web site—UptownUncorked.com—that trains businesses in how to create a presence in social media and the Internet.

"Mainly the reason I'm doing this is because there are not a lot of jobs, and I would rather be my own boss," he said.

At Howard University, job fairs that once drew 100 companies are now drawing about 80, said Harold L. Gray Sr., director of the Center for Professional Development and the Center for Insurance Education.

Some career center officials said they have heard of job offers being rescinded or jobs changing or being eliminated after the graduates arrive at work. Others say undergraduates are planning to wait out the economic downturn in graduate school.

Recruiters painted a mixed picture.

Tim Namie, area manager for Manpower Professional, a hiring agency, said that jobs are available but that there are many more applicants to fill them. Ordinarily, when his recruiters post a job, they receive 100 or 150 resumes. Now they are getting more than 200.

"In a tight labor market like this, I would say employers are looking for the upper hand and trying to get more bang for their buck," he said. "They're looking for different things. They're looking for the internship. They're looking for someone who is more aggressive."

How does one stand out in a market like this?

Don't rely only on Monster.com and other Web sites that match employers with job candidates, said recruiters and career center officials. If you are in college now, get as much experience as you can in your field, through internships or part-time work, even if it is unpaid.

Start your job search early, at least a semester or even a year ahead of graduation. Network as much as you can. Reach out to alumni. Join professional associations. Even use connections you have through relatives and friends. "A lot of students have pride. They don't want to ask mom and dad for connections, but you need to tap into every network you have," Gray said.

And be open to jobs you might not have considered before. Mark Kenyon, associate director of the University of Maryland's career center, said many of the students he counseled were considering jobs in the federal government when in the past they would only have looked at higher-paying, private-sector jobs. "As recent graduates coming out of college, they need to be open to multiple types of career opportunities," he said, adding that most of his students found jobs.

Staff researcher Meg Smith contributed to this report.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Slated to graduate from the University of Maryland in the fall, English major Triston McIntyre, 23, has already started his own business in anticipation of a weak market for writing jobs. As the economy teeters on the edge of recession, college graduates this year face a tough job market.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Remodel while you wait out the market

By DAVID UFFINGTON
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Many home sellers are finding this a grim market for sales. Houses sit ... and sit ... with For Sale signs in the yard. Knowing that the market will eventually come back, many families are instead deciding to dig in for the duration -- opting to make changes to their existing home rather than try to sell in a bad market.

Remodeling your home can do two things: It can give you more of the things you want in a house right now, and it can position you well for an eventual sale when the market comes back.

With remodeling, however, the trick is to avoid making expensive mistakes.

If you'll need a contractor, get one signed up for late September or October, and negotiate a discount. The later in the year you can schedule the work, the better, as most remodeling companies count on warm months to do the bulk of their year's work. Knowing they'll have off-season work, they're more likely to agree to discounts. (Of course this might not work if you live in snow country and need a roof.)

Consult with real-estate agents so you don't spend too much in the wrong areas and not get a good return on your money when you eventually sell. Kitchens and bathrooms are the biggest selling points for buyers, but even there you can go wrong if you pick update items that turn out to be only a fad, like concrete countertops in the kitchen.

Consider how serious the disruption will be to your household, and how long it will go on. How long can you realistically survive without a kitchen? Or a bathroom? (There's something to be said for offering a bonus to a contractor who finishes on time.)

Will your property taxes and insurance go up? Find out, and add those numbers into your future expenses calculations, as well as the cost of any construction loan you take out.

Above all, consider whether it is smarter to merely fix up your home instead of doing a major remodeling. An addition that includes a master suite with bathroom won't be as much of a selling point later if the exterior siding is damaged or the kitchen cabinets are falling off the hinges.

David Uffington regrets that he cannot personally answer reader questions, but will incorporate them into his column whenever possible. Write to him in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send e-mail to columnreply@gmail.com.

Nation

Palin mocks Obama; McCain claims nomination

By DAVID ESPO
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AMERICA VOTES

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)—Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin claimed her historic spot as the Republican Party's vice presidential nominee Wednesday night, uncorking a smiling, sarcastic attack on Barack Obama and winning cheers of acceptance and approval after a tumult-filled first week on the national stage.

She vowed to the Republican National Convention—and millions more around the country—that she would help presidential nominee John McCain bring real change to Washington, saying "he's a man who's there to serve his country and not just his party."

McCain joined her on stage, to even bigger cheers. In an anti-climactic roll call vote, the delegates then awarded him the presidential nomination he has sought for a decade—propelling him into the fall campaign. At 72, the Arizona senator is the oldest first-time nominee in history.

The 44-year-old Palin, scarcely known a week ago, had top billing on the third night of the convention. The first woman vice presidential candidate in party history, she made her solo national debut after days of tabloid-like scrutiny of her and her family.

Some of the biggest roars were for her barbs aimed at Democratic presidential nominee Obama.

"Victory in Iraq is finally in sight; he wants to forfeit," she said of Obama. "Al-Qaida terrorists still plot to inflict catastrophic harm on America; he's worried that someone won't read them their rights."

To the delight of the delegates, McCain strolled unexpectedly onto the convention stage after the speech and hugged his running mate.

"Don't you think we made the right choice" for vice president? he said as his delegates roared their approval. It was an unspoken reference to the convention-week controversy that has greeted her, including the disclosure that her 17-year-old unmarried daughter was pregnant.

The packed convention hall exploded in cheers as McCain stood with Palin and her family—including mother-to-be Bristol and the father, 18-year-old Levi Johnston.

Palin drew waves of approval from the moment she stepped onto the convention stage, hundreds of camera flashes reflecting off her glasses.

If McCain and his campaign's high command had any doubt about her ability at the convention podium, they needn't have.

AP

Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin stands amid a sea of celebrating delegates as she addresses the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008.

Palin delivers star-turning performance at RNC

By TOM RAUM and LIZ SIDOTI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)—Sarah Palin delivered. An embattled vice presidential candidate, a novice on the national stage, the head of a family suffering its "ups and downs," the first-term Alaska governor rocked the GOP convention with a star-turning performance.

Wielding a stiletto and a smile, Palin belittled Democrat Barack Obama and praised her new boss, John McCain, jolting the crowd of GOP partisans.

"Don't you think we made the right choice for the next vice president of the United States!" McCain said, hinting the controversy surrounding his pick. "And what a beautiful family."

Indeed, the family was on display for the TV cameras—five children, including a 17-year-old unmarried daughter who is pregnant. Their mother lacked the soaring oratory skills of Obama—a man she attacked as a tax-raising, terrorist-coddling, self-indulgent liberal. But the former TV sportscaster spoke in calm, TV-friendly tones reminiscent of Ronald Reagan. Like the former GOP president, Palin warmed the crowd with quips and jokes.

"What's the difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull," she said, pausing for a beat and a smirk. "Lipstick."

She left the crowd smiling.

"For too many times, we've brought knives to gun fights," said Chuck Gast, a delegate from Maryland,

When asked if Palin brought a gun to the fight, Gast said: "Yes, I think she brings a big gun, like a moose gun."

AP

Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin holds son, Trig, as she talks with her daughter, Bristol, after her family joined her on stage after her speech at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008. At right is daughter, Willow, and in back is Bristol's boyfriend, Levi Johnston.

It was the crowning moment of a roller-coaster week in which the first woman ever on a Republican presidential ticket has faced questions about how closely the McCain campaign scrutinized her. She also has heard a wide range of inquiries about family issues, her policy positions and her record of public service.

"Our family," she said, "has the same ups and downs as any other."

One speech does not a campaign make. Kept at arm's length from the media in the days leading up to the address, Palin now heads out on the campaign trail, where events are less rehearsed, crowds less friendly and the environment less controlled. Even as she spoke, airplanes in Alaska were unloading reporters and political operatives sent to pore through her personal and public life.

A big test comes at the Oct. 2 vice presidential debate with her Democratic counterpart, Joe Biden.

But tonight was hers.

Facing down her critics with smiling resolve, Palin took crowd-delighting swipes at Obama and what she called the Washington elite. "Here's a little news flash for all those reporters and commentators: I'm not going to Washington to seek their good opinion. I'm going to Washington to serve the people of this country," she said.

A new celebrity herself, Palin cast Obama as a little more than a fancy speaker with a compelling biography.

"The American presidency is not supposed to be a journey of 'personal discovery.' This world of threats and dangers is not just a community, and it doesn't just need an organizer," Palin said, a clear reference to Obama's time as a community organizer in Chicago.

The Obama campaign had less than a warm greeting, saying Palin's speech was "written by George Bush's speechwriter and sounds exactly like the same divisive, partisan attacks we've heard from George Bush for the last eight years." The speech was written by Matthew Scully, who met Palin for the first time last week.

Selected by McCain only last Friday, Palin addressed the convention amid questions about her qualifications and relative lack of experience.

The first-term governor had top billing at the convention on a night delegates also lined up for a noisy roll call of the states to deliver their presidential nomination to McCain.

Watching her speech were her husband Todd and their children, including daughter Bristol Palin, whom the Palins disclosed earlier in the week was five months pregnant. Bristol's 18-year-old boyfriend and apparent fiance, Levi Johnston, was seated with them.

With her youthful experience as a sportscaster and time spent in the governor's office, her timing was flawless, her appeal to the crowd obvious.

"Our family has the same ups and downs as any other, the same challenges and the same joys," she said as the audience signaled its understanding.

She traced her career from the local PTA to the governor's office, casting herself as a maverick in the McCain mold, and seemed to delight in poking fun at her critics and her ticket-mate's political rivals.

Since taking office as governor, she said she had taken on the oil industry, brought the state budget into surplus and vetoed nearly one-half billion dollars in wasteful spending.

"I thought we could muddle through without the governor's personal chef—although I've got to admit that sometimes my kids sure miss her."

Not surprisingly, her best-received lines were barbs at Obama.

"I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a `community organizer,' except that you have actual responsibilities," she said, a reference to Obama's stint as a community organizer.

"I might add that in small towns we don't quite know what to make of a candidate who lavishes praise on working people when they are listening and then talks about how bitterly they cling to their religion and guns when those people aren't," she said.

That was a reference to Obama's springtime observation about some frustrated working-class Americans.

By contrast, she said of McCain: "Take the maverick out of the Senate. Put him in the White House.

"He's a man who's there to serve his country, and not just his party."

"In politics, there are some candidates who use change to promote their careers," she said in another cutting reference to Obama's campaign theme. "And then there are those, like John McCain, who use their careers to promote change."

A parade of party luminaries preceded Palin to the convention podium, and Republicans packing the hall cheered every attack on Obama.

"He's never run a city, never run a state, never run a business, never run a military unit. He's never had to lead people in crisis," said former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani of McCain's rival.

"This is not a personal attack ... it's a statement of fact—Barack Obama has never led anything. Nothing. Nada."

Palin also jabbed at the news media, which have raised convention week questions about her background and her family.

New Orleans reluctantly opens doors after Gustav

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Thousands of people who fled Hurricane Gustav forced the city to reluctantly open its doors Wednesday, while President Bush returned to the site of one of the biggest failures of his presidency to show that the government had turned a corner since its bungled response to Katrina.

Faced with traffic backups on paths into the city, Mayor Ray Nagin gave up checking ID badges and automobile placards designed to keep residents out until early Thursday. Those who returned said if the city was safe enough for repair crews and health care workers, it was safe enough for them, too.

"People need to get home, need to get their houses straight and get back to work," said George Johnson, who used back roads to sneak into the city. "They want to keep you out of your own property. That's just not right."

But once back at home, tens of thousands of people had no power and no idea when it might return. Across the state, nearly 1.2 million homes and businesses were without electricity, and officials said it could take as long as a month to fix all outages.

"There is no excuse for the delay. We absolutely need to quicken the pace at which power is restored," Gov. Bobby Jindal said.

Within hours of returning to his suburban home, Paul Braswell was sweating over an outdoor grill as he cooked the chicken and deer sausage he stored in his freezer alongside gallon-size blocks of ice before evacuating with his family to Mississippi

"We don't have any power, and we don't know when it'll come back on, so we're going to eat all we can until it does," he said. "Tomorrow, we're boiling shrimp my mom left in her freezer."

Restoring power was critical to reopening schools, businesses and neighborhoods. Without electricity, gas stations could not pump fuel, and hospitals were running out of fuel for generators.

AP

Taviana Carlson, 3, shields her face against stinging wind as she makes her way to a neighbor's home after her grandmother's apartment lost power as hurricane Gustav moves by Lafayette, La., Monday, Sept. 1, 2008.

La. governor and New Orleans mayor praised

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—If Hurricane Katrina was one big lesson in government bungling, Gustav has been an open-book test of whether the politicians learned anything from the disaster.

And so far, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal and Mayor Ray Nagin are getting high marks.

In the days leading up to Gustav, Jindal and Nagin persuaded a sometimes complacent populace to get out well ahead of the storm. They didn't mince words; they didn't hedge bets. In the end, they were credited with overseeing the exodus of 2 million people in one of the biggest and smoothest evacuations in U.S. history.

That take-charge attitude in a crisis could bring political rewards, especially for Jindal, a 37-year-old Republican once mentioned as a potential running mate for John McCain.

"You've got a governor who took charge," said Jim Duffy, a Louisiana native and national political consultant who has worked for several Louisiana Democrats. "It helps him a great deal. He already had a reputation of being this wunderkind."

Marc Rotterman, a GOP media strategist based in North Carolina, said: "Bobby Jindal is a rising star in the Republican Party. He's handled himself very well under very stressful conditions in regards to Hurricane Gustav. The contrast to his predecessor is startling."

"I think it's too early to talk about the presidency," Rotterdam added, "but if he wants to be, he'll be a player for the next several decades."

There are still plenty of things that could go wrong and cause public opinion to turn against the governor and the mayor. For example, nearly 1.2 million homes and businesses across Louisiana are without electricity, and officials said it could take a month to restore power to everyone. Also, many evacuees are furious they had to wait at least two days before being allowed to return. Some may refuse to leave if another hurricane menaces Louisiana in the coming weeks.

But so far, the contrast with Katrina has been spectacular.

Nagin was bitterly criticized for not ordering New Orleans evacuated until the day before Katrina hit, and for what some saw as erratic leadership as the city slipped into anarchy. Katrina also proved to be the political ruin of Democratic Gov. Kathleen Blanco, who decided not to seek re-election after she was widely seen as weak, indecisive and incapable of working with the Bush administration during the crisis.

Report: US drug use shows little change in 2007

WASHINGTON (AP)—Cocaine and methamphetamine use among young adults declined significantly last year as supplies dried up, leading to higher prices and reduced purity, the government reports. Overall use of illicit drugs showed little change.

About one in five young adults last year acknowledged illicit drug use within the previous month, a rate similar to previous years. But cocaine use declined by one-quarter and methamphetamine use by one-third.

Drug use increased among the 50-59 age group as more baby boomers joined that category. Their past month drug use rose from 4.3 percent in 2006 to 5 percent in 2007.

"The baby boomers have much higher rates of self-destructive behavior than any parallel age group we have data from," said John Walters, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Walters, 55, is a boomer himself.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health, being released Thursday by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is based on interviews with about 67,500 people.

Overall, about 20 million people 12 or older reported using illicit drugs within the past month. Marijuana was the most popular by far, with 14.4 million acknowledging use of marijuana in the past month.

Among adolescents, age 12 to 17, drug use dipped from 9.8 percent in 2006 to 9.5 percent last year, continuing a five-year trend. Their use of alcohol and cigarettes also fell during the same period.

It's Atlantic Coast's turn as Hanna eyes Southeast

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP)—Officials along the southern Atlantic coast held off ordering evacuations Wednesday amid uncertainty about where Tropical Storm Hanna might come ashore and how strong it will be when it gets there.

Instead, they kept close tabs as Hanna battered the southern Bahamas and Haiti. Forecasters tentatively predicted the storm would return to hurricane strength before hitting somewhere along the South Carolina and North Carolina coasts, probably Saturday.

Some coastal residents booked inland hotel rooms while others gave a collective shrug. Officials contemplated whether to order evacuations, make them voluntary or simply tell people to sit tight, a decision complicated by Hanna's unpredictability.

"It's much more difficult than if it's coming straight at you," said Clayton Scott, emergency management director for the county that includes Savannah, Ga Hanna, responsible for at least 26 deaths in Haiti, had state disaster planners considering turning major highways into one-way evacuation routes for the roughly 1 million people who live between Savannah and Wilmington, N.C.

"When the governor decides to issue an evacuation order, we know there is $200 billion of residential real estate along the coast and hundreds of thousands of people at risk," said Derrec Becker, spokesman for the South Carolina Emergency Management Division. "It's not a decision made lightly. We're not going to wait for the last minute."

ACROSS THE NATION

Plea deal near in Detroit mayor perjury case

DETROIT (AP)—Prosecutors accusing Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick of lying on the witness stand to cover up an extramarital affair said Wednesday that a plea deal is expected soon, a surprise development that appeared likely to cost him his job. The office of Wayne County prosecutor Kym Worthy said Wednesday that an agreement is expected, first saying it would come that afternoon and later saying it would be Thursday morning. The Detroit city charter automatically expels any mayor guilty of a felony. Kilpatrick is charged with eight felonies in the perjury case and would have to get them all reduced to misdemeanors—or beat the charges in court—to keep his job. A member of the mayor's legal team cautioned that talks continued. "The plea deal has not been consummated. … They're still working out the finer points," lawyer James Thomas said after spending the day defending Kilpatrick at a separate hearing led by Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

Ohio mom spared death penalty for microwaving baby

DAYTON, Ohio (AP)—A woman convicted of murdering her infant daughter by microwaving her was spared the death penalty Wednesday by a jury that couldn't reach a unanimous decision. China Arnold showed no immediate reaction, but she smiled and waved to family members as deputies led her from the courtroom. Her relatives told her they loved her. "I love you all, too," said Arnold, 28. The defense had argued that Arnold was drunk when the offense occurred and had no motive, while prosecutors had called the crime "heinous" as they argued for the death penalty. After about five hours of deliberation, the jury told Montgomery County Common Pleas Judge Mary Wiseman that it couldn't decide whether to recommend the death penalty or life in prison, and that it wouldn't be able to make such a decision even if it deliberated through Thursday. Wiseman is now limited to sentencing Arnold to life in prison without parole, life without parole for at least 30 years, or life without parole for at least 25 years. She plans to impose her sentence Monday.

Investigators puzzled by trail of Wash. killings

ALGER, Wash. (AP)—Authorities on Wednesday were trying to determine what set off a shooting and stabbing rampage that left six people dead and four wounded, attacks they blame on a drug offender who was released from jail less than a month ago. The mother of suspect Isaac Zamora said he is "desperately mentally ill" and had been living in the woods. Dennise Zamora said one of those killed Tuesday was a sheriff's deputy who had tried to help their family for years. Isaac Zamora, 28, was being held Wednesday on suspicion of first-degree murder and attempted first-degree murder and is being held on $5 million bail. The shootings began close to Dennise Zamora's house near the small town of Alger, about 70 miles north of Seattle. They continued amid a high-speed police pursuit on Interstate 5 and ended in Mount Vernon, about 20 miles south of Alger, when Isaac Zamora turned himself in at a sheriff's office.

Asia

Thai protest leader wants to reduce voters' power

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Sondhi Limthongkul says he is fighting to save Thai democracy from the corrupt politicians who have abused it to remain in power.

But analysts say that the agenda pushed by Sondhi—and his comrades who have occupied Bangkok's seat of government for a week—would severely set back the country's fragile political system.

The 61-year-old media mogul and protest leader for the People's Alliance For Democracy wants to abandon the Thailand's popularly elected parliament for one in which a majority of members would be appointed.

"Democracy has been here 46 years and we keep getting the same vicious circle," Sondhi told The Associated Press in an interview on the grounds of the Government House, as the prime minister's office compound is known. "Something has to be wrong with the system

Sondhi's media empire includes a daily newspaper, a popular news Web site and a satellite television station that effectively serves as the voice of the protest alliance and a counterpoint to government-controlled stations. Thousands of alliance supporters—who include royalists, the urban elite and union activists—say their protests are aimed at forcing Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej to resign, accusing him of being a proxy for his predecessor Thaksin Shinawatra. Thaksin was ousted in a 2006 coup and has since fled to Britain.

AP

Sondhi Limthongkul, co-leader of People's Alliance for Democracy, who led the demonstrators to seize government house, addresses the demonstration in Bangkok, Thailand Thursday, Aug. 28, 2008.

But their real target appears to be the country's electoral system.

The alliance's plan "turns out to be a startlingly reactionary proposal to move Thailand's parliamentary system towards ... what might be called a selectoral democracy," Michael Connors, an expert on Thai politics who teaches at La Trobe University in Australia, wrote on the Thai Web site Prachatai.com in July.

Connors and other academics have said Sondhi's plan would enhance the power of the country's military and monarchy at the expense of the poor.

"The majority of Thais, especially in the rural areas, will suffer the most because they will lose their voices and the bargaining power given to them by the 1997 constitution," said Thanet Charoenmaung, a political science lecturer at Chiang Mai University.

The 1997 charter was billed as an attempt to broaden democracy, but critics charge it backfired by marginalizing the power of small parties and allowing bigger, richer groups—such as Thaksin's now-defunct Thai Rak Thai Party—to grab bigger pieces of the pie for themselves.

Thaksin and his political allies have won four consecutive elections since 2001, leaving opposition leaders like Sondhi demoralized and struggling to find a way to woo the country's rural majority—key to political victory in Thailand.

Thaksin's success has largely depended on his populist policies that provided rural residents with cheap health care, village development funds and debt forgiveness schemes.

Promising similar policies, Samak's People's Power Party won elections in December and formed the current government.

Report: Thai foreign minister steps down

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Thailand's state news agency says Foreign Minister Tej Bunnag has resigned, but government officials are refusing to confirm the report.

The agency says Bunnag sent his resignation to Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, who had not yet approved it.

Foreign ministry officials told The Associated Press they could not confirm the news, which was carried by other Thai media outlets.

The Thai News Agency's Wednesday report says that Tej was resigning to take care of his sick wife.

One source associated with the opposition, former deputy Foreign Minister Sukhumbhand Paribatra, has told Matichon newspaper he had information that Tej had stepped down.

The reported development comes with Samak's government under pressure to step down from protesters who have occupied the grounds housing the prime minister's offices in the capital Bangkok.

RP govt dissolves negotiating peace panel

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine government on Wednesday disbanded a panel of negotiators engaged in Malaysian-brokered peace talks with Muslim guerrillas, suspending a yearslong peace process following fresh fighting in the country's south.

But President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and her key aides stressed that the government was not permanently abandoning the idea of peace talks. Instead, they will seek a new approach that involves wider consultations with affected communities and a promise by the rebels to disarm, they said.

The government also will continue to honor a cease-fire guarded by Malaysian-led peace monitors in southern Mindanao, a resource-rich agricultural region considered the homeland of minority-Muslims, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said at a news conference.

The disbanded government panel, which was led by retired Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, will be reconstituted depending on several factors, including the selection of new negotiators to be nominated by communities and groups affected by the decades-long, bloody Muslim rebellion, Ermita said.

Arroyo said Wednesday that widespread fighting, which has killed scores of soldiers, rebels and civilians in Mindanao's mountainous heartland since last month, should stop before the talks with the 11,000-strong Moro Islamic Liberation Front can resume.

"We must bring stability to the region and regain order before we can effectively reactivate the peace process in earnest," Arroyo said in a speech at a Manila jobs fair for young Muslims.

Rebel vice chairman Ghazali Jaafar said Arroyo can disband the panel anytime. But "what is important is (that) there has been no pronouncement that the peace talks have been cut off," he told The Associated Press by telephone.

Jaafar, however, wondered how both sides would deal with an emergency without a government panel authorized to deal with the rebels.

NKorea informed US it would restore nuke operation

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea told the United States this week it would start restoring its nuclear facilities before it began to move mothballed equipment for reinstatement, a South Korean official said Thursday.

Pyongyang gave the notification Tuesday to U.S. personnel stationed at the North's Yongbyon nuclear plant and started moving some equipment, taken apart from plutonium-producing facilities, out of storage Wednesday, said a Foreign Ministry official.

"They were moving some equipment" to the original sites, said the official, citing information provided by the United States. But he did not say what the equipment was. The official spoke on condition of anonymity citing the issue's sensitivity.

"This is a clear violation of a six-party agreement," he said, referring to a disarmament pact that the North reached with the U.S. and four other nations last year. The official said Seoul would try to persuade Pyongyang to reverse its action.

North Korea had publicly warned of such a move last week after stopping work to disable facilities at Yongbyon, including its main nuclear reactor, claiming Washington had failed to remove it from the U.S. blacklist of states sponsoring terrorism under a deal reached last year.

The U.S. played down Pyongyang's latest step.

"Based on what we know from the reports on the ground, you don't have an effort to reconstruct, reintegrate this equipment back into the facility," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

U.S. officials have been stationed at the North's Yongbyon complex to monitor the disablement work, along with officials from the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

Despite the apparent start of restoration work, the North did not go as far as kicking out the international monitors. That may suggest the latest move is only a negotiating tactic meant to pressure Washington to keep its promise to take Pyongyang off the terror list.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Zardari says global terror Pakistan's priority

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—The front-runner in Pakistan's presidential election says global terrorism is the biggest challenge facing the country and that it will continue to stand by the United States. The comments from Asif Ali Zardari come after U.S. troops carried out their first known cross border ground attack on a suspected militant target. Pakistan's government, which is dominated by Zardari's party, issued strong protests. However, Zardari said in a newspaper article published Thursday that Pakistan stood with the U.S. and other countries who have been attacked by terrorists. He said an apparent assassination attempt on the prime minister hours after the U.S. raid underlined that global terrorism was Pakistan's primary challenge.

China says flaws caused quake schools to collapse

BEIJING (AP)—China said Thursday a rush to build schools in recent years could have led to construction flaws that caused so many of them to collapse during May's massive earthquake. Thousands of students died in the buildings in Sichuan province in China's southwest, and questions about lax construction methods have become a flashpoint for government critics. Ma Zongjin, the chairman of an official expert committee on the May 12 earthquake, said poor quality construction materials were one possible reason more than a thousand schools were damaged in the quake. "In recent years a lot of school buildings have been built in China and in this process of rapid development, some problems may exist," Ma told reporters in Beijing. "The structure of the school buildings may not be reasonable enough and the related construction materials may not be strong enough."

Big turbine delivered to Afghan aid project

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—It was a weeklong journey through Afghanistan's most dangerous Taliban territory, dodging persistent attacks by insurgents and bumping over rough desert terrain riddled with mines. But a snaking convoy of 4,000 coalition forces, guarded by dozens of attack helicopters and fighter jets, arrived successfully with its cargo: a turbine for a U.S.-funded dam project that could provide more than 6 percent of the country's electricity. More than 200 Taliban militants were killed by forces protecting the convoy, British officials told a reporter from the Times of London who traveled with the group. No deaths were reported among coalition forces but a British soldier had his pelvis crushed as he tried to repair a broken down vehicle, reporter Jeremy Page wrote.

World

French businesses loath to end 35-hour work week

PARIS (AP)—It's being called the coup de grace for France's decade-long experiment with a 35-hour work week—a policy that inspired both envy and ridicule in Europe and the U.S., and even some copycats.

But the short work week proved difficult to implement and was derided by some in government as a "straitjacket" on France's economy.

Now a new law lets companies negotiate more hours from employees. But it's being met with resistance, even from the employers it was meant to benefit, suggesting President Nicolas Sarkozy's headline reform may do little to boost growth.

When France first implemented the 35-hour work week in 1998, economists well beyond the country's borders wondered: Is this the future of work in the developed world? But instead, the ensuing decade saw rich nations' workers laboring ever more.

Even in France, workers average 41 hours a week, thanks to overtime and those workers, like farmers and the self-employed, who aren't subject to the short week. That's more than Germany or Britain—and not much less than the average 41.7 hours worked in the United States in 2006.

Previous efforts to erode France's 35-hour week have been routinely met with protests. This time, however, workers have put up little fuss because the law went into force during the summer vacation season and it was left up to companies to apply the longer hours. And unions have made it clear they will fight, through strikes or tough negotiations, if and when companies put it to the test.

Even businessmen who railed against the 35-hour work week say they don't plan to make use of the new law, at least for now, fearing labor disputes like a decade ago.

The shortened week was "a very bad thing. It devalued work, it's unhealthy and difficult," said Gilles Lecointre, chief executive of Intercessio, an economic consulting firm in Paris.

But he has no intention of ditching his company's 35-hour agreement.

US troops mistakenly kill 6 Iraqis

BAGHDAD (AP)—U.S. troops on boats in the Tigris river mistakenly killed six Iraqis Wednesday in an exchange of fire between the two sides north of Baghdad, Iraqi officials said.

The clash began when Iraqi troops at a checkpoint fired at approaching U.S. military boats near Tarmiyah, 30 miles north of Baghdad, police and security officials said. They did not realize the boats, which had their lights off, were American.

The U.S. soldiers fired back, killing two Iraqi soldiers, two police officers and two U.S.-backed Sunni tribesmen, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not allowed to release the information to the media.

Two U.S. helicopters later fired on a one-room house on an island in the river near the site of the clash, the Iraqis said.

The U.S. military confirmed there was an incident of "mistaken fire" between U.S. and Iraqi forces while the U.S.-led coalition was conducting an operation in the area against suspected al-Qaida in Iraq militants. A U.S. spokesman said aircraft were also involved but did not give more details.

"It is always regretful when incidents of mistaken fire occur on the battlefield," the spokesman, Maj. John Hall, said in an e-mail. An investigation was under way, he said.

The shootout came two days after a suicide bomber attacked the home of a local awakening council leader in Tarmiyah. The leader was wounded and another member of the U.S.-allied Sunni group was killed, the U.S. military has said.

The awakening councils have joined the fight against al-Qaida in Iraq and are one of the key reasons why violence in Iraq is at its lowest levels in years.

But there is concern that those armed Sunni groups could turn their guns on the Shiite-led government if it fails to deliver on promises of economic help, jobs in the security forces and a share of political power.

Recently, the government has moved against some awakening groups in Diyala province, arresting some of their leaders and evicting them from offices. Government officials complain that many council members had tied to Saddam Hussein's regime or were involved in crimes.

AP

Awakening council members stand guard during a demonstration supporting them in the Azamiyah area of Baghdad, Iraq, Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008.

Hanna takes aim at Bahamas, Ike next in line

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP)—While officials from Nassau to South Carolina were keeping an eye on Tropical Storm Hanna, behind it, Hurricane Ike lumbered across the Atlantic as a powerful Category 4 storm.

Hanna was just east of the Bahamas and heading northwest early Thursday, a day after knocking out power to the southern Bahamas.

The storm, with winds near 65 mph (100 kph), turned to the northwest Wednesday after lingering for days near Haiti, where it caused flooding that killed 26 people.

Bahamas National Security Minister Tommy Turnquest canceled all leave for the Bahamas Royal Defence Force to keep soldiers on standby for disaster response.

"I now urge the general public to take the necessary precautions," Turnquest said at a news conference Wednesday.

But as Hanna took aim at the heart of this Atlantic archipelago, islanders were also tracking two other storms churning westward in the open ocean, including Ike, which rapidly swelled late Wednesday evening into a ferocious Category 4 hurricane with winds near 135 mph (215 kph).

Ike was roaring far out in the Atlantic, 610 miles (980 kilometers) northeast of the Leeward Islands, and forecasters said it was too early to say if it would threaten land. It was moving toward the west-northwest at 17 mph (28 kph).

Ike is the third major hurricane of the Atlantic season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. The other two were Bertha and Gustav.

Meanwhile, forecasters said Josephine, the tropical storm behind Ike, was weakening.

"We've got three of them on the way. We've just got to be prepared," said Frank Augustine, a 47-year convenience store manager, as he bought 10 five-gallon water jugs under blue skies at a Nassau depot.

Sarkozy reaches out to Syria on peace prospects

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)—French President Nicolas Sarkozy encouraged Syria to pursue face-to-face peace talks with Israel during his first trip Wednesday to the Arab nation—a visit also aimed at undercutting Iranian influence in Damascus.

After discussions with President Bashar Assad, Sarkozy said France was ready to sponsor direct Syria-Israel talks "when the time comes" and would help in any way it could, if asked.

"It is very important that the time for Syria and Israel to talk directly comes soon, to build the peace that everyone needs," Sarkozy said at a joint news conference with Assad.

He also stressed that Syria could play a role in persuading its ally Iran to cooperate on resolving Tehran's standoff with the West over the Iranian nuclear program.

The French leader has tried to forge better relations with both Syria and Libya—countries some other Western powers have been reluctant to engage with. His visit reflects a push to bring Syria out of isolation and boost efforts to get Damascus to talk directly with it's longtime foe, Israel.

WORLD BRIEFS

Rival Cypriot leaders upbeat after new peace talks

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP)—The leaders of Cyprus' Greek and Turkish communities started new peace talks Wednesday and said they hoped to reach accord soon on reuniting this Mediterranean island partitioned by war 34 years ago. Cyprus President Dimitris Christofias met for two hours with Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat inside the U.N.-patrolled buffer zone that separates the two communities. The leaders emerged to express confidence that they can reach an agreement. They plan to meet again Sept. 11, U.N. officials said. "We will try our utmost to achieve (a settlement) as soon as possible," Christofias said. "This is a common will, a common desire, and we shall make common efforts."

Zambian leader's wife says he died unappreciated

LUSAKA, Zambia (AP)—Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa was buried Wednesday on what would have been his 60th birthday amid accolades from fellow African leaders, but his widow said he died a sad, unappreciated man. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa praised Mwanawasa for helping in "the restoration and strengthening of regional political unity and cohesion." Widely regarded as a man of integrity, the soft spoken Mwanawasa broke the long silence of African leaders earlier this year to criticize his autocratic neighbor, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, and the political crisis in that country, which he likened to a "sinking Titanic." The remarks encouraged a few other African leaders to show their displeasure with Mugabe.

Congo army leaves national park, rebels stay

DAKAR, Senegal (AP)—More than 1,000 soldiers have left a national park that has been on the front lines of fighting in eastern Congo in a move the park director said was intended to preserve an environment that is home to endangered gorillas, hippos and active volcanoes. However, rebels still occupy a sector of the reserve that is home to some of the world's last remaining mountain gorillas, officials said Wednesday. The decision to move out all government troops and their families—about 6,000 people in all—came after negotiations between Virunga National Park Director Emmanuel de Merode and Gen. Vainqueur Mayala, the army's commanding officer, Merode said in a statement. The move aims to "reduce human presence in the area and preserve the flora and fauna of Africa's oldest national park," de Merode said.

19-square-mile ice sheet breaks loose in Canada

TORONTO (AP)—A chunk of ice shelf nearly the size of Manhattan has broken away from Ellesmere Island in Canada's northern Arctic, another dramatic indication of how warmer temperatures are changing the polar frontier, scientists said Wednesday. Derek Mueller, an Arctic ice shelf specialist at Trent University in Ontario, told The Associated Press that the 4,500-year-old Markham Ice Shelf separated in early August and the 19-square-mile shelf is now adrift in the Arctic Ocean. "The Markham Ice Shelf was a big surprise because it suddenly disappeared. We went under cloud for a bit during our research and when the weather cleared up, all of a sudden there was no more ice shelf. It was a shocking event that underscores the rapidity of changes taking place in the Arctic," said Mueller.

Off the Wall

Conn. league says 9-year-old's too good to pitch

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP)—Nine-year-old Jericho Scott is a good baseball player—too good, it turns out.

The right-hander has a fastball that tops out at about 40 mph. He throws so hard that the Youth Baseball League of New Haven told his coach that the boy could not pitch any more. When Jericho took the mound anyway last week, the opposing team forfeited the game, packed its gear and left, his coach said.

Officials for the three-year-old league, which has eight teams and about 100 players, said they will disband Jericho's team, redistributing its players among other squads, and offered to refund $50 sign-up fees to anyone who asks for it. They say Jericho's coach, Wilfred Vidro, has resigned

But Vidro says he didn't quit and the team refuses to disband. Players and parents held a protest at the league's field on Saturday urging the league to let Jericho pitch

"He's never hurt any one," Vidro said. "He's on target all the time. How can you punish a kid for being too good?"

The controversy bothers Jericho, who says he misses pitching.

"I feel sad," he said. "I feel like it's all my fault nobody could play."

Jericho's coach and parents say the boy is being unfairly targeted because he turned down an invitation to join the defending league champion, which is sponsored by an employer of one of the league's administrators.

Jericho instead joined a team sponsored by Will Power Fitness. The team was 8-0 and on its way to the playoffs when Jericho was banned from pitching.

AP

Jericho Scott, 9, warms up on the pitching mound in New Haven, Conn. Saturday Aug. 23, 2008.

"I think it's discouraging when you're telling a 9-year-old you're too good at something," said his mother, Nicole Scott. "The whole objective in life is to find something you're good at and stick with it. I'd rather he spend all his time on the baseball field than idolizing someone standing on the street corner."

League attorney Peter Noble says the only factor in banning Jericho from the mound is his pitches are just too fast.

"He is a very skilled player, a very hard thrower," Noble said. "There are a lot of beginners. This is not a high-powered league. This is a developmental league whose main purpose is to promote the sport."

Noble acknowledged that Jericho had not beaned any batters in the co-ed league of 8- to 10-year-olds, but say parents expressed safety concerns.

"Facing that kind of speed" is frightening for beginning players, Noble said.

League officials say they first told Vidro that the boy could not pitch after a game on Aug. 13. Jericho played second base the next game on Aug. 16. But when he took the mound Wednesday, the other team walked off and a forfeit was called.

League officials say Jericho's mother became irate, threatening them and vowing to get the league shut down.

"I have never seen behavior of a parent like the behavior Jericho's mother exhibited Wednesday night," Noble said.

Scott denies threatening any one, but said she did call the police. League officials suggested that Jericho play other positions, or pitch against older players or in a different league.

Local attorney John Williams was planning to meet with Jericho's parents Monday to discuss legal options.

"You don't have to be learned in the law to know in your heart that it's wrong," he said. "Now you have to be punished because you excel at something?"

Buy $169K Michigan dollhouse, get real home 'free'

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. (AP)—Like many homeowners around the country, Gerry and Cindy Mann have struggled to sell their house during the past year.

So they decided to use a more creative sales approach: Buy a miniature replica of the home for $169,000 and get the real thing thrown in for free.

"After a year I was thinking, 'I don't know, I have this dollhouse sitting in my basement; let me see if I can do some creative marketing,'" Gerry Mann, 60, told the Battle Creek Enquirer for a story Tuesday.

The Manns, who are planning to retire to Brighton, Mich., are caught in the national housing slump. Area home sales are at their lowest levels since 1991, according to the Michigan Association of Realtors.

Cindy Mann's father, the late Ron Caldwell, fashioned the dollhouse to resemble the home. Using a scale of 1 foot to 1 inch, he built the model about 15 years ago for the couple's three now-grown children to enjoy.

The retired engineer toiled for more than a year. He cut the wooden swinging closet doors, trimmed the sandpaper shingles and wired the electric fixtures himself.

The Manns estimate the dollhouse is worth a couple thousand dollars. They are hoping the addition of their digs will ease the pain of the $167,000 markup.

"I've seen funny signs, like, 'Hey, honey, stop the car,' but I haven't seen anything like this," said Matt Davis, president of the Battle Creek Area Association of Realtors' Board of Directors. "I mean, it's a pretty creative idea, and God bless 'em if it works."

Idaho wildfire reveals new stretch of Oregon Trail

BOISE, Idaho (AP)—A wildfire that damaged or destroyed nearly 20 homes in Idaho last month also revealed remnants of the Oregon Trail.

Members of the Idaho Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association plan to mark portions of the pioneer trail now visible after the Aug. 25 fire.

Before the blaze, two parallel paths totaling about a half-mile had been covered by sagebrush and cheatgrass. The paths, which are light depressions in the ground, stretch across a field below a ridge where the homes burned.

The paths were discovered in satellite photographs taken days after the fire.

Association member Wally Meyer told the Idaho Statesman that the last wagon through southeast Boise probably crossed the plain about 1890 on the property, now owned by the Idaho Power Co., which is negotiating with the group to allow signs along the newly found paths.

"We are happy to help with this historic effort," said Idaho Power spokeswoman Anne Alenskis.

Investigators have concluded that an equipment failure on one of the company's electricity lines ignited the fire.

During his 30-year career with the Bureau of Land Management, Meyer said he marked about 150 miles of migrant-trail remnants on public land in southwest Idaho.

The recent discovery is not a major surprise, given what's known about the Oregon Trail's route through Boise, Meyer said.

"Nobody's ever really looked before," Meyer told The Associated Press. "I've always kind of wondered. But it didn't pay to check these because there was pretty tall sagebrush and growth there. But the Oregon Trail is always easy to find after a fire."

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Man told to get a job accused of chair attack

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP)—A man was arrested after he allegedly responded to someone telling him to get a job by picking up a folding chair and striking another man with it three times. Coralville police responded to a fight in progress around 5 p.m. on Sunday, and arrested the man and charged him with assault causing bodily injury. According to police reports, the suspect was drinking beer with a friend when the victim, whose name police are not publishing, told the suspect to "get a job." The man then allegedly picked up the folding chair and hit the victim. The man was in custody as of Monday afternoon with a $2,000 cash bond.

Man accused of igniting sleeping man's pants

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. (AP)—A man was freed on $20,000 bond after being accused of setting another man's pants on fire. Joseph Hornsey, 21, was charged with aggravated battery. Madison County Sheriff's Captain Brad Wells said the 20-year-old victim had been drinking alcohol and camping in Hornsey's backyard when Hornsey lit the frayed strings on the man's pants. Wells says the alleged victim managed to put out the fire and went back to sleep, only to awaken later with burn-related blisters on his leg. He was treated at a hospital for second-and third-degree burns to his leg. A message seeking comment from Hornsey was left Wednesday with a relative.

Woman accused of crashing her SUV into a home

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—Portland police say the Labor Day weekend got off to a rough start for a Westbrook woman accused of deliberately crashing her SUV into a home during an angry dispute over money. Police say the woman faces charges of aggravated assault, reckless conduct with a dangerous weapon and drunken driving, as well as driving with a suspended license. Police say they were called to a home Friday night following the dispute over money between the woman, her friends and people at a home in Portland. Officers arrived to see the woman's sport utility vehicle back up and ram the building. She's also accused of hitting a man in the head with a rock.

Jaywalker allegedly moons motorists after ticket

ATHENS, Ga. (AP)—Athens-Clarke police have arrested a woman who they say started mooning motorists after she received a ticket for jaywalking. An officer stopped the 23-year-old woman and a friend about 1:10 a.m. Saturday after they walked diagonally across the intersection in downtown Athens. Police said both women had been drinking and were upset and disorderly as the officer began writing them tickets for not crossing in a crosswalk. Police said after getting the citation, the Covington woman walked across Clayton Street and lifted her skirt, then walked to the middle of Jackson Street and did it again, walking around while shaking her buttocks in front of oncoming traffic. The officer noted in his report that the woman used the crosswalks while crossing the street to expose herself. She was arrested for misdemeanor public indecency.

Cross-dressing thief leaves fake breast behind

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP)—Police in Port St. Lucie are on the lookout for a cross-dressing man who snatched a 74-year-old woman's purse. As if that weren't odd enough, they're depending on a strange clue. The suspect left behind a condom filled with water he had been using as a fake breast. The woman said she believed the thief followed her while shopping. A witness told investigators he was wearing a short denim skirt and black tube top, and fled in a silver car with two other male crossdressers. Police are processing the condom for fingerprint and DNA evidence.

Alleged credit card thief signs name on receipts

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP)—Iowa City police say they didn't have much trouble finding a man accused of using a stolen credit card—he signed his own name to the receipts. Police said the man used the stolen credit card to buy a latte at a coffee house and to buy cigarettes at a tobacco store. Police said the credit card was reported stolen from an unlocked apartment last month. They said the man also tried to use it at another store, but the card was declined because it came up as stolen. He also used the card at a local deli. He has been charged with four counts of unauthorized use of a credit card.

Science & Technology

Facebook adds some new wrinkles

By JILL ROSEN
(C) 2008, THE BALTIMORE SUN

Are you on Facebook? No? You're not? 'Cause you're too old?

Now that's just silly.

Two years ago, the social media Web site changed from college students-only to something anyone could join—no matter how many gray hairs they might have.

Facebook is no longer just for kids, but people with kids—even grandkids.

But yet, you hesitate.

Sarah Taylor, a Maryland mother who's 43, joined Facebook to keep an eye on her kids (another popular reason for joining, although not necessarily an honorable one). But Taylor ended up starting a group called Born in the '60s. It has 10,483 members and counting.

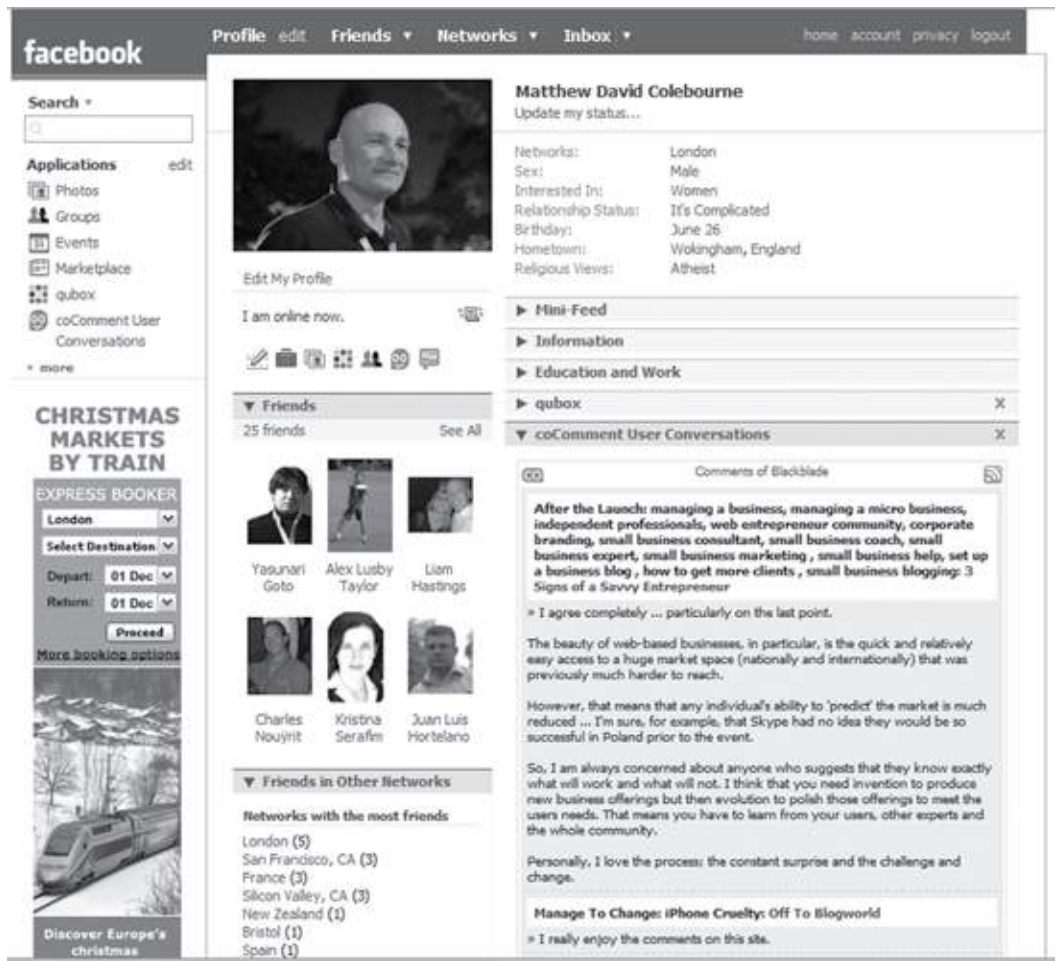
"We are showing the world that not only do we know about Facebook," she writes, "but we are actively using it!"

On her page, people are posting pictures of their childhood toys like Lite-Brite, posting old Three Stooges videos, reminiscing about drive-in theaters and talking about their favorite wines.

With a click of your mouse, you can offer silent support or, if you want to get more involved, you can connect with like-minded people. One of the anti-global warming groups, for example, has more than 140,000 members, people who are posting videos and talking to each other about ways to lessen their carbon footprints.

The politically minded will also find plenty to do on Facebook. Everyone from Sen. John McCain to Sen. Barack Obama thave Facebook pages.

You can visit McCain's and Obama's pages to see photos from the campaign trail, watch their latest ads and read news stories that the candidates (or their staff) have flagged.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EXPRESS BOOKER
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Select Destination
Depart: 01 Dec
Return: 01 Dec
Proceed
More booking options
Discover Europe's christmas
Matthew David Colebourne
Update my status...
Networks: London
Sex: Male
Interested In: Women
Relationship Status: It's Complicated
Birthday: June 26
Hometown: Wokingham, England
Religious Views: Atheist
Edit My Profile
I am online now.
Mini-Feed
Information
Education and Work
qubox
coComment User Conversations
Friends
25 friends
See All
Yasunari Goto
Alex Lusby Taylor
Liam Hastings
Charles Nouyrit
Kristina Serafim
Juan Luis Hortelano
Friends in Other Networks
Networks with the most friends
London (5)
San Francisco, CA (3)
France (3)
Silicon Valley, CA (3)
New Zealand (1)
Bristol (1)
Spain (1)
Comments of Blackblade
After the Launch: managing a business, managing a micro business, independent professionals, web entrepreneur community, corporate branding, small business consultant, small business coach, small business expert, small business marketing , small business help, set up a business blog , how to get more clients , small business blogging: 3 Signs of a Savvy Entrepreneur
» I agree completely ... particularly on the last point.
The beauty of web-based businesses, in particular, is the quick and relatively easy access to a huge market space (nationally and internationally) that was previously much harder to reach.
However, that means that any individual's ability to 'predict' the market is much reduced ... I'm sure, for example, that Skype had no idea they would be so successful in Poland prior to the event.
So, I am always concerned about anyone who suggests that they know exactly what will work and what will not. I think that you need invention to produce new business offerings but then evolution to polish those offerings to meet the users needs. That means you have to learn from your users, other experts and the whole community.
Personally, I love the process: the constant surprise and the challenge and change.
Manage To Change: iPhone Cruelty: Off To Blogworld
» I really enjoy the comments on this site.
Facebook is no longer just for kids, but people with kids – even grandkids. And, of course, politicians.

Signing up for Facebook is a no-brainer

(c) 2008, The Baltimore Sun

You don't need to be tech-savvy to sign up for Facebook. If you can type and have an e-mail account, you're in.

■ Go to facebook.com.

■ The sign-up box will be right on the home page. Fill out your name. Type in your e-mail address. Think of a password and type that in, too. Add your sex and birthday.

■ Facebook will send a message to the address you provided to make sure it's really you. Once you confirm, you're in.

■ At this point, you can fill out your profile with as little or as much information as you're comfortable with. You can add a picture of yourself, details from your resume, your favorite books and movies. Or not. You can skip all that and just search for people you know. But the more information you include about the schools you attended and the places you worked, the easier it will be for you and your friends to find one another.

If you're like a lot of folks older than 40, you e-mail, you love getting family photos online, but you avoid the social networking thing.

According to a recent JWT Boom/Third Age study of boomers and their online activity, about 53 percent said they weren't using anything like Facebook, LinkedIn or MySpace. But about 22 percent were. And another 26 percent said they might try it.

Web experts predict Facebook will soon reflect the demographics of the Internet, where, according to a recent survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 70 percent of people ages 50 to 64 roam happily online.

There are other social media sites designed especially for mature audiences, such as Eons.com and the AARP's Web site. But Facebook is the most popular social media site, and one of the most visited on the Internet.

Here are five good reasons the AARP-eligible or almost-eligible might enjoy Facebook:

Support causes/political candidates

On Facebook, people can join groups designed to do everything from fight global hunger, help endangered species and

Find old friends

When you sign up, you can plug in your college or high school as well as places you've worked and Facebook will automatically show you people you might know from those schools and offices.

And, you can search for long-lost friends and relatives and find out where they're living, what they look like these days, if they have kids.

"I'm keeping in touch with people I haven't talked to in a long time," says Taylor, who found an ex-boyfriend from 20 years ago. "And they can see what's going on in my life and ask me about it."

Another way to show off photos and videos of the kids and grandkids.

Once you've showed all of your friends, neighbors and co-workers the pictures of your new baby or grandbaby, you can load those images onto Facebook and solicit oohs and aws from every friend, relative and acquaintance you ever had.

Proud parents and grandparents never had it so easy.

Keep in touch

E-mail is the digital generation's go-to way to keep casually in touch. But on Facebook, you can keep track of folks even more easily, without having to write to them.

The site sends members memos on their friends' major life moments (Stan's engaged!) or mundane daily doings (Alice is going to the dentist!). Just log on to find your Facebook circle's updated news.

Network

With its Six Degrees of Separation way of linking one person to hundreds of others, Facebook can be a networking dream, or at least a way of promoting yourself or whatever you might be selling.

If you have an event to promote, a house to sell, a resume to circulate or a Web site to share, it's hard to imagine an easier way.

Timmian Massie, the 50-year-old spokesman for Marist College in upstate New York who's been on Facebook for three years, has helped people find work through it.

"I go to my Facebook network and pass that person's name, background and resume around so they can be introduced to my gang and get help looking for jobs," he says. "If I were in need of a job, I'd put my name out there."

Fandom

Since his Olympic victory, thousands upon thousands of people have become Facebook fans of Michael Phelps.

While Phelps might be the most popular guy on Facebook, there are plenty of other celebrities, even those of a certain age, that you can electronically adore. Consider Michael Jordan, Sean Connery, Celine Dion, Morgan Freeman, Stanley Kubrick, Alfred Hitchcock, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep.

New eBay site has social, environmental aim

NEW YORK (AP)—Most consumers probably associate eBay Inc. more with vintage lunch boxes and low-priced electronics than with laptop bags made from recycled plastic by women in New Delhi.

The online auction operator is trying to change that perception with WorldofGood.com, a Web site launched Wednesday to sell goods produced with social and environmental goals in mind.

EBay developed the site with World of Good Inc., a startup focused on "ethical supply chains" behind consumer products, and licensed the group's name for the marketplace. World of Good will get a share of the revenue from the site, which had been operating for the past six months as an online community focused on the social impact of business.

WorldofGood.com, a Web site launched Wednesday, sells goods produced with social and environmental goals in mind.

The site will sell fixed-price goods that purportedly have some positive effect on people and the planet. The goal is to help consumers align their social values with their shopping decisions, WorldofGood.com general manager Robert Chatwani said.

Shoppers will be able to search for products by certain social or environmental categories, revealing, for example, a photo of the man who produced the fair-trade coffee you're interested in buying, details of its origins and whether some of the proceeds support a charitable cause.

Independent third-party organizations like Rainforest Alliance and Co-op America will screen sellers and verify the items listed on the site.

"We really want consumers to drill down into the detail of what's behind that product," Chatwani said.

Already the market for products that emphasize social and environmental awareness is growing. Chatwani cited the Natural Marketing Institute's estimate that the U.S. market for such goods was $209 billion in 2005, and the group projects that will rise to $420 billion in 2010.

And while there are plenty of places to buy such items already, eBay and its 84.5 million active users might dramatically increase awareness for artisans. WorldofGood.com items will also be cross-listed on eBay proper, blended into standard search results.

The arrangement drew praise from Roberto Milk, chief executive of Novica, which works with artisans around the world to sell their home decor items on eBay. The National Geographic Society owns a stake in the company.

Novica has sold things on eBay since 1999, but given the enormous nature of the site, "nobody knows we're on eBay," he said. This could change with additional sales on WorldofGood.com, where Novica will sell items it has either bought or taken on consignment.

"All our artisans really need is exposure," he said.

As on eBay, sellers on WorldofGood.com will pay fees to list items and give eBay a commission on successful sales. All transactions will be made through eBay's electronic payment system, PayPal. At launch, the site will have several hundred sellers, including many merchants who are also current eBay sellers.

Google polishes product line with Chrome browser

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. (AP)—The new Web browser that Google Inc. released Tuesday is designed to expand its huge lead in the Internet search market and reduce Microsoft Corp.'s imprint on personal computers.

The free browser, called "Chrome," is being promoted as a sleeker, faster, safer and reliable alternative to Microsoft's Internet Explorer, which has been the leading vehicle for surfing the Web for the past decade. Despite recent inroads by Mozilla Foundation's Firefox, Internet Explorer is still used by roughly three-fourths of the world's Web surfers.

"What we want is a diverse and vibrant ecosystem," Google co-founder Sergey Brin told reporters Tuesday during Chrome's unveiling. "We want several browsers that are viable and substantial choices."

Among other features, Chrome's navigation bar—the space where you type in an Internet address—will serve a dual purpose. Users can either enter an address into the space or type a search request that will be processed through their search engine of choice.

Naturally, Google bets it will be the default search engine for the majority of Chrome users, helping to build upon its nearly 64 percent share of the worldwide search market.

"You only have 24 hours a day and we would like you to do more searches," Google's other co-founder, Larry Page, said at the unveiling. "If the browser runs well, then you will do more searches."

And more queries generate more revenue for Google, whose search engine is the hub of the Internet's largest advertising network.

Google also is counting on Chrome to become the linchpin in its effort to distribute widely used computer programs like word processing, spreadsheets and calendars through the Web browser instead of as applications installed on individual machines. If the crusade is successful, it might undercut Microsoft's profits by diminishing sales of its Office software package

"Chrome will strengthen the Web as the biggest application platform in the world," predicted Jon von Tetzchner, chief executive of the company that makes the Opera browser, which ranks a distant fourth in the market. Microsoft, which crushed Netscape Communications to win the last major browser war in the 1990s, played down the threat posed by Chrome. Microsoft predicted that most people will embrace its latest version, Internet Explorer 8, which it released in test status last week.

But Benchmark Co. analyst Brent Williams thinks Microsoft has cause for concern. In a Tuesday research note, Williams described Chrome as a "a new, potentially significant, challenge to Microsoft's Web strategy and to (Microsoft's) core product suite, and indeed to (Microsoft's) business model."

AP

The logo for the Google Chrome Web browser is shown during a news conference at Google Inc. headquarters in Mountain View, Calif., Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2008.

Microsoft shares fell 19 cents to $27.10 Tuesday while Google shares gained $1.96 to $465.25.

Chrome may lure even more users from Firefox, which has grabbed more than 10 percent of the browser market with the help of an advertising and search alliance with Google. The ad partnership was recently extended through 2011.

Because Chrome and Google both are built on similar "open-source" models that share computer coding with outside developers to foster innovation, the products are likely to appeal to similar subsets of Web surfers looking for alternatives to Internet Explorer.

"If there is a casualty in the browser wars, it's likely to be Mozilla's Firefox," the Info-Tech Research Group predicted Tuesday.

Google executives emphasized that they wouldn't have been able to build Chrome during the past two years without the inroads already made by Firefox, and expressed hope that the two browsers will blend the best features from both products.

"I hope big chunks of Chrome make it into the next generation of Firefox," Brin said.

In a blog posting, Mozilla CEO John Lilly said he had been expecting Google to enter the browser market for some time and predicted that Firefox would continue to hold its own.

"It should come as no real surprise that Google has done something here—their business is the Web, and they've got clear opinions on how things should be, and smart people thinking about how to make things better," Lilly wrote.

Chrome hopes to set new standards for browsers by enabling Web pages and applications to run on separate tabs that won't crash if there is a problem on another tab. The tabs also can be moved around on a page or even placed on a computer desktop.

The browser also will remember a user's favorite destinations and automatically display the nine most visited Web sites in a tab. For users who don't want someone else with access to the same computer to know where they have been, Chrome also includes an "incognito" tab that conceals the Web surfing activity.

Internet Explorer has a built-in advantage Chrome and other competing Web browsers because it's pre-installed on the hard drives of most computers running on Microsoft Windows.

Although Chrome currently must be downloaded over an Internet connection, Google plans to explore deals that would pre-install its browser, too. Those arrangements conceivably could drive up Google's expenses, but Brin thinks it will be worth the investment if Chrome encourages people to spend more of their lives online.

"Our business does well if there is healthy Internet usage," Brin said.

HELP FILE

By ROB PEGORARO
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Q: You've mentioned setting Web browsers to refuse the cookies set by advertising networks. How do I do that, exactly?

A: On the Web, a cookie—a tiny, inert text file that a Web site drops on your hard drive as a sort of placeholder to read or edit later—is usually harmless. These files are often helpful when they save your preferences or logins for you.

But advertising networks can also use cookies to track your Web use and measure your interests, so as to show you (in theory) more-relevant ads. The banner ad the network inserted into your favorite site can save a cookie on your computer; other ads on other sites placed by the same network can then access this cookie, allowing the company to build a profile of what sites you visit.

This practice may not be the biggest privacy risk you face, on or offline. But if it bothers you, you can tell your browser to decline these "third-party" cookies, sometimes called "tracking cookies."

(Doing so may cause issues at sites that use cookies in weird ways, but I can't remember the last time I had any such problems.)

In Microsoft's Internet Explorer 7, go to its Tools menu, select Internet Options and click the Privacy tab; there, click the Advanced button. In the Advanced Privacy Settings window, click the checkbox next to "Override automatic cookie handling" and, under the "Third-party Cookies" heading, click the button next to "Block."

Other browsers don't require as many steps to change this behavior. In Mozilla Firefox 3, go to its Tools menu and select Options (on a Mac, go to the Firefox menu and select Preferences), click the Privacy tab and click to clear the checkbox next to "Accept third-party cookies." Apple's Safari requires no work at all, because it blocks third-party cookies by default.

Internet traffic grows 53 percent from mid-2007

NEW YORK (AP)—International Internet traffic kept growing in the last year, but at a slower rate than before, and carriers more than kept pace by adding more capacity, a research firm said Wednesday.

The findings by TeleGeography Research are important because some U.S. Internet service providers say they are struggling with the expansion of online traffic, and are imposing monthly download limits on heavy users. The figures from TeleGeography don't exactly correlate to average Internet usage by U.S. households, but give an indication of wider trends.

TeleGeography said traffic grew 53 percent from mid-2007 to mid-2008, down from a growth rate of 61 percent in the previous 12 months.

Growth on long-haul lines in the U.S. was even slower, at 47 percent. The big increase came in regions where the Internet is less mature. Traffic between the U.S. and Latin America more than doubled.

Meanwhile, international Internet capacity on ocean-spanning optical fibers increased 62 percent. On average, Internet traffic now uses just 29 percent of the available bandwidth.

TeleGeography research director Alan Mauldin noted that the number of new broadband subscribers has been falling since 2001, but that the overall increase in Internet traffic remains high because of the increasing demand for online video.

New music site gives fans a cut of tune sales

NEW YORK (AP)—Being a trendsetter can be pricey. As any fashionista or gadget hound knows, the latest frocks and tech toys don't pay for themselves. But a new Web site is trying to make it profitable for music lovers to stay ahead of the curve—by paying them when other people purchase MP3s they've bought.

Berkeley, Calif.-based Popcuts, which publicly launched its Web site in early August, charges users 99 cents per song. Thereafter, whenever someone else buys the same song, those who have already bought it get paid in credit that can be redeemed for more Popcuts music. The earlier you buy a song, the larger your cut of future sales.

AP

From left, Popcuts co-founders Hannes Hesse, CEO Kevin Mateo Lim, and Yiming Liu, are photographed in Somerville, Mass., Friday, Aug. 29, 2008.

And while credit is currently the payment option, the site's founders hope to eventually pay users in cash, too.

Hannes Hesse, 28, one of the company's three co-founders, said the idea came from a desire to better align the interests of artists who want to sell their music and fans who want to get it for free.

"We thought that by providing this extra incentive to buy a song legally, namely, owning a stake in that song, would make it more attractive to buy," Hesse said.

Popcuts user Gary Yao, 25, said that while he'd prefer cash to the current site credit that users earn, he likes being rewarded for buying songs. So far, he's earned $5.25 by buying tracks.

"It gives me an incentive to go out there and see what's new and available," the San Francisco-based product analyst said, adding that he's discovered a few new bands by using the site over the past month.

The site's selection is still pretty slim—it includes around 700 songs from about 200 artists—but Popcuts is adding musicians through a deal it recently made with music distributor DashGo Inc. and is looking to connect with more distributors and with record labels.

Anyone making music can sell their tunes through the site, while maintaining full rights to their work. The agreement between artists and Popcuts is not exclusive, Hesse said, so music makers can sell songs through services like Apple Inc.'s online iTunes Store as well.

Popcuts takes 10 to 20 percent of song sales. Artists can determine what cut they get, and the rest goes to fans.

Since fans who buy songs early get a larger cut of subsequent sales, Hesse thinks a lot of people will search for new tunes and buy those that sound promising.

Popcuts' future is uncertain, though. Besides its small music catalog, it's navigating a market populated by several large, established players like Apple and Amazon.com Inc. that already have the allegiance of many digital music buyers.

Still, Mike McGuire, an analyst for Gartner Inc., said Popcuts' model of sharing with users can be very effective. Besides making money, users might feel as if their purchases are helping to invest in the bands on the site.

Then, "I as a consumer can say, `Hey, I'm doing my part,'" McGuire said.

Life & Style

Canceled Muhammad novel finds new publisher

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP)—A historical novel about the prophet Muhammad and his child bride that was pulled by Random House over concerns it would anger Muslims has been sold to another publisher, the author said Wednesday.

"We do have a U.S. publisher," Sherry Jones, of Spokane, told The Associated Press in an e-mail Wednesday. "We can announce that, but not the name until they announce it." Jones' agent, Natasha Kern, said a publisher for "The Jewel of Medina" in the United States and the United Kingdom will be announced later Wednesday.

Jones said her debut novel will be published in October, two months after it was to have been published by Random House Publishing Group.

"Now we can all move the conversation forward to address the themes in my debut novel and its sequel, of women's empowerment, reconciliation, and peace," Jones said.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Sherry Jones and her novel, "The Jewel of Medina," are subjects of debate from Egypt to Italy to Serbia. The former reporter went from being a Book-of-the-Month Club pick to seeing her novel dropped by Random House, which was concerned that the fictionalized story of one of Muhammad's wives might incite violence.

The book will also be published in Germany, Italy, Spain, Brazil and Hungary, Jones said. In August, Serbian publisher BeoBook released "The Jewel of Medina" but then quickly withdrew it from stores after protests from local Islamic leaders who said it insulted Muhammad and his family.

Random House, which paid Jones $100,000 for "The Jewel of Medina" and a second book, spiked the novel about Muhammad and his third wife, Aisha, after concerns were raised by non-Muslims that the contents might spark violence.

Random House said at the time that "credible and unrelated sources" had warned that the book "could incite acts of violence by a small, radical segment."

Following the Random House decision, Salman Rushdie, whose "The Satanic Verses" led to a death decree in 1989 from Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that forced the author to live under police protection for years, said the publisher had allowed itself to be intimidated.

"I am very disappointed to hear that my publishers, Random House, have canceled another author's novel, apparently because of their concerns about possible Islamic reprisals," Rushdie said in an e-mail sent last month to The Associated Press. "This is censorship by fear, and it sets a very bad precedent indeed."

Reggaeton's 'El Father' turns to The Father

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—A Puerto Rican reggaeton star announced Wednesday he will give up his role as a rapper known for lyrics about violence and womanizing to devote his life to God.

Hector "El Father" Delgado held a surprise news conference in Puerto Rico's capital to say he will follow a religious calling and preach positive messages to youngsters once he has completed a tour for his next CD, "Final Judgment," which he said would have Christian lyrics.

"My way now is to serve Christ in spirit and truth," Delgado told reporters, adding he intended to donate his cache of bling, including diamonds and other sparklers for wrists, fingers and neck, to charitable groups.

Delgado, who grew up in the Puerto Rican city of Carolina, won a 2003 Billboard Latin Music Award for rap album of the year as part of the duo "Los Bambinos," and he has collaborated with U.S. hip-hop superstar Jay-Z.

He was one of the pioneers of reggaeton—a mix of tropical rhythms, reggae, hip-hop and rap from Puerto Rico that took hold in the major U.S. Hispanic markets of Miami, Los Angeles and New York.

Delgado's announced retirement from reggaeton comes as the often irreverent Puerto Rican genre is going through some growing pains as it fights for a place on the mainstream stage.

It also comes about six months after a Puerto Rican woman seeking an autograph from Delgado was grabbed and apparently bitten by someone in his entourage and several shots were fired. Delgado was acquitted of several criminal charges filed against him in the incident.

'Peanuts' animator Bill Melendez dies at 91

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—Bill Melendez, the animator who gave life to Snoopy, Charlie Brown and other "Peanuts" characters in scores of movies and TV specials, has died. He was 91. Melendez died of natural causes Tuesday at St. John's Health Center, according to publicist Amy Goldsmith.

Melendez's nearly seven decades as a professional animator began in 1938 when he was hired by Walt Disney Studios and worked on Mickey Mouse cartoons and classic animated features such as "Pinocchio" and "Fantasia."

He went on to animate TV specials such as "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and was the voice of Snoopy, who never spoke intelligible words but issued expressive howls, sighs and sobs.

Melendez was born in 1916 in Hermosillo in the Mexican state of Sonora. He moved with his family to Arizona in 1928 and then to Los Angeles in the 1930s, attending the Chouinard Art Institute.

AP

In this Feb. 18, 2000 file photo, Peanuts animator Bill Melendez is seen here in his Sherman Oaks studio in Los Angeles. Melendez, the animator who gave life to the Peanuts characters in scores of TV specials and movies, including holiday classics such as "A Charlie Brown Christmas," died Tuesday Sept. 2, 2008 in Santa Monica, Calif.

Melendez took part in a strike that led to the unionization of Disney artists in 1941, and later moved to Warner Bros., where he worked on Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig and Daffy Duck shorts.

In 1948, Melendez left Warner Bros. and over the next 15 years worked as a director and producer on more than 1,000 commercials and movies for United Productions of America, Playhouse Pictures and John Sutherland Productions.

At UPA, he helped animate "Gerald McBoing-Boing," which won the 1951 Academy Award for best cartoon short.

Melendez met "Peanuts" creator Charles M. Schulz in 1959 while creating Ford Motor Co. TV commercials featuring Peanuts characters.

The two became friends and Melendez became the only person Schulz authorized to animate his characters.

Melendez founded his own production company in 1964 and with his partner Lee Mendelson went on to produce, direct or animate some 70 "Peanuts" TV specials, four movies and hundreds of commercials.

The first special was 1965's "A Charlie Brown Christmas." The show reportedly worried CBS because it broke so much new ground for a cartoon: It lacked a laugh track, used real children as voice actors, had a jazz score and included a scene in which Linus recited lines from the New Testament.

However, the show was a ratings success and has gone on to become a Christmastime perennial.

BEST SELLERS

Nonfiction

1. ***The Last Lecture,*** by Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow (Hyperion: $21.95). A professor's terminal cancer inspires a call to seize life's moments.
2. ***When You Are Engulfed in Flames***, by David Sedaris (Little, Brown: $25.99). Musings on life and smoking.
3. ***The Way of the World***, by Ron Suskind (Harper: $27.95). Suskind writes that America must regain its lost moral authority to fight nuclear terrorism.
4. ***Life With My Sister Madonna***, by Christopher Ciccone with Wendy Leigh (Simon Spotlight Entertainment: $26). A brother's tale of life with the famous entertainer.
5. ***The Obama Nation***, by Jerome R. Corsi (Threshold Editions: $28). The reasons against an Obama presidency and why he should be defeated.
6. ***sTORI Telling***, by Tori Spelling (Simon Spotlight: $24.95). The old-school 90210 star tells all.
7. ***The Dark Side***, by Jane Mayer (Doubleday: $27.50). Mayer argues that the White House amassed power in the post-9/11 state of panic to devastating results.
8. ***The Secret*** by Rhonda Byrne (Beyond Words: $23.95). Life's secrets, distilled from oral tradition, literature, religion and philosophy.
9. ***Goodnight Bush***, by Erich Origen and Gan Golan (Little, Brown: $14.99). A parody of the children's classic Goodnight Moon.
10. ***Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea***, by Chelsea Handler (Simon Spotlight Entertainment: $24.95). The talk-show host skewers dating, family and work.

Fiction

1. ***Moscow Rules***, by Daniel Silva (Putnam: $26.95) The death of a journalist leads Gabriel Allon to a Russian arms dealer.
2. ***Breaking Dawn***, by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown: $22.99) The final book in the Twilight saga finds Bella choosing immortality as a vampire.
3. ***Eclipse***, by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown: $19.99) Bella must choose between her lover and a friend, life and death.
4. ***The Host***, by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown: $25.99) Alien invaders take over the minds of humans.
5. ***The Enchantress of Florence***, by Salman Rushdie (Random House: $26) A traveler arrives at the Mughal emperor's court with a beguiling tale.
6. ***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society***, by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows (Dial Press: $22) A writer's correspondence with an island's inhabitants in the aftermath of German occupation.
7. ***The Story of Edgar Sawtelle***, by David Wroblewski (Ecco: $25.95) A mute dog breeder is banished by his uncle in this twist on Hamlet.
8. ***The Mercedes Coffin***, by Faye Kellerman (William Morrow: $25.95) Los Angeles Lt. Peter Decker and wife Rina Lazarus must solve a 15-year-old cold case.
9. ***Smoke Screen***, by Sandra Brown (Simon & Schuster: $26.95) A firefighter seeks vindication from a past scandal by solving the murder of a former co-worker.
10. ***The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao***, by Junot Diaz (Riverhead: $24.95) A sci-fi-loving nerd and his immigrant family are haunted by the past.

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TOP OF THE CHARTS

Jonas Brothers

TOP 10 POP SINGLES

This Week Last Week

1. Rihanna No. 1 "Disturbia" (SRP/Def Jam)
2. David Archuleta new entry "Crush" (19/Jive)
3. Chris Brown No. 2 "Forever" (Jive)
4. Katy Perry No. 3 "I Kissed a Girl" (Capitol)
5. Coldplay No. 6 "Viva La Vida" (Capitol)
6. M.I.A. No. 5 "Paper Planes" (XL)
7. Kardinal Offishall feat. Akon No. 7 "Dangerous" (KonLive/Geffen)
8. Rihanna No. 4 "Take a Bow" (SRP/Def Jam)
9. Ne-Yo No. 10 "Closer" (Def Jam)
10. Taylor Swift new entry "Change" (Big Machine)

TOP 10 ALBUMS

1. Jonas Brothers new entry "A Little Bit Longer" (Hollywood)
2. Soundtrack No. 1 "Mamma Mia!" (Decca)
3. Kid Rock No. 4 "Rock N Roll Jesus" (Top Dog/Atlantic)
4. Miley Cyrus No. 2 "Breakout" (Hollywood)
5. Sugarland No. 3 "Love On the Inside: Deluxe Fan Edition" (Mercury Nashville)
6. Lil Wayne No. 5 "Tha Carter III" (Cash Money/Universal Motown)
7. Coldplay No. 6 "Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends" (Capitol)
8. Soundtrack No. 8 "Camp Rock" (Walt Disney)
9. Rihanna No. 9 "Good Girl Gone Bad" (SRP/Def Jam)
10. Jonas Brothers No. 11 "Jonas Brothers" (Hollywood)

TOP 10 HOT COUNTRY SINGLES

1. Taylor Swift No. 1 "Should've Said No" (Big Machine)
2. Keith Urban No. 2 "You Look Good In My Shirt" (Capitol Nashville)
3. Keith Anderson No. 4 "I Still Miss You" (Columbia)
4. Jimmy Wayne No. 8 "Do You Believe Me Now" (Valory)
5. Brad Paisley No. 7 "Waitin' On a Woman" (Arista Nashville)
6. Brooks & Dunn No. 5 "Put a Girl In It" (Arista Nashville)
7. Sugarland No. 3 "All I Want to Do" (Mercury)
8. Alan Jackson No. 6 "Good Time" (Arista Nashville)
9. George Strait No. 9 "Troubadour" (MCA Nashville)
10. Darius Rucker No. 12 "Don't Think I Don't Think About It" (Capitol Nashville)

TOP TEN MOVIES

1. Tropic Thunder (R) Ben Stiller, Robert Downey Jr.
2. The House Bunny (PG-13) Anna Faris, Colin Hanks
3. Death Race (R) Jason Statham, Joan Allen
4. The Dark Knight (PG-13) Christian Bale, Heath Ledger
5. Star Wars: The Clone Wars (PG) animated
6. Pineapple Express (R) Seth Rogen, James Franco
7. Mirrors (R) Kiefer Sutherland, Paula Patton
8. The Longshots (PG) Ice Cube, Keke Palmer
9. Mamma Mia! (PG-13) Amanda Seyfried, Stellan Skarsgard
10. The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (PG-13) Brendan Fraser, Jet Li

TOP 10 VIDEO RENTALS

1. Nim's Island (PG) Abigail Breslin (Fox)
2. 21 (PG-13) Jim Sturgess (Sony Pictures)
3. Harold & Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay (R) John Cho (New Line)
4. The Bank Job (R) Jason Statham (Lionsgate)
5. Doomsday (R) Caryn Peterson (Universal)
6. Never Back Down (PG-13) Sean Faris (Summit)
7. Vantage Point (PG-13) Dennis Quaid (Sony Pictures)
8. College Road Trip (G) Martin Lawrence (Disney)
9. Step Up 2: The Streets (PG-13) Briana Evigan (Disney/Touchstone)
10. Lost Boys: The Tribe (R) Tad Hilgenbrink (Warner)

TOP 10 DVD SALES

1. Nim's Island (PG) (20th Century Fox)
2. Harold & Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay (R) (New Line)
3. 21 (PG-13) (Sony Pictures)
4. Stargate: Continuum (NR) (MGM)
5. Starship Troopers 3: Marauder (R) (Sony Pictures)
6. Never Back Down (PG-13) (Summit)
7. Batman Begins (PG-13) (Warner)
8. Independence Day (PG-13) (20th Century Fox)
9. Snatch (R) (Sony Pictures)
10. Casino Royale (PG-13) (MGM)

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Spears to open MTV Video Music Awards

NEW YORK (AP)—It's Britney, baby, one more time. Despite her train-wreck performance at the MTV Video Music Awards last year, the network confirms Spears will kick off the show once again.

But it won't be a performance. Instead, MTV Networks Music Group President Van Toffler said Wednesday, it'll be something "fun and unexpected" on Sunday night's show.

Unexpected is probably the kindest way to describe Spears' performance at last year's VMAs. In what was heavily promoted as the troubled singer's comeback, she instead gave an unfocused, almost unwatchable performance of "Gimme More," one of the many low points in her year of debacles.

So what made Spears and MTV reunite one more time?

"MTV has long played an important role in my career. How can I not be there to kick off their 25th VMAs? I'm excited to open the entire show, to say hi to my fans and to be nominated," Spears said in a statement.

"I think for Britney, people are rooting for her, and she's really on the road to recovery," Toffler said, noting that MTV had nominated her for three VMAs, including video of the year, for her clip "Piece of Me."

"It feels like it's her year," he added. "It's our 25th anniversary of the VMAs, and she's been such a critical piece of MTV's history."

While she bombed in 2007, Spears has given the VMAs many highlights over the years, from her kiss with Madonna to her performance with a writhing snake.

Spears also equals ratings gold: Last year's VMAs were up 23 percent over the 2006 show.

In recent months, Spears, who's working on a new album, has appeared to have cleaned up her act (although a judge on Wednesday refused to dismiss a misdemeanor driving without-a-valid-license case against her). Her father James has been in control of her personal and professional matters as her legal conservator, and she drew high ratings and positive reviews when she made guest appearances on CBS' "How I Met Your Mother" earlier this year.

So far, the confirmed performers for Sunday's show include the Jonas Brothers, Lil Wayne, Rihanna, T.I. and Kid Rock.

Toffler also raised the possibility of another troubled pop icon appearing: Michael Jackson.

"We've been talking to him as well, I don't know if that's going to happen," he said. "People fall in and fall out up until the day of the show."

AP

In this Dec. 1, 2007 file photo, singer Britney Spears poses on the press line at the Scandinavian Style Mansion party in Los Angeles.

Judge refuses to dismiss case against Spears

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A judge on Wednesday refused to dismiss a misdemeanor driving without-a-valid-license case against Britney Spears. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge James A. Steele issued his ruling after reviewing statutes cited by prosecutors and Spears' attorney, J. Michael Flanagan.

The ruling means the singer may go on trial in October.

Flanagan had asked for that the case be dismissed during a hearing on Tuesday. He said that prosecutors were targeting Spears because she is a celebrity. He said that, normally, people cited for similar offenses are ordered to pay a fine if they can produce a valid license.

Steele's ruling disagreed, saying prosecutors properly charged Spears.

The case is the last remnants of a criminal case city prosecutors lodged against Spears after she hit a parked car in August 2007 and left without notifying the owner. She was originally cited for hit-and-run and driving without a license, but the hit-and-run charge was dropped.

Flanagan said Tuesday that Spears had a valid Louisiana driver's license when she was involved in an accident last year. He says she got a California license within six days of being notified of the infraction.

Steele, however, stated in his ruling that documents in other legal cases involving Spears indicate she was a California resident for 17 months before the offense. A person has 10 days after establishing residency in California to get a license, Steele's ruling states.

Flanagan did not immediately return a call seeking comment Wednesday afternoon. He said after Tuesday's hearing that he would appeal if Steele did not dismiss the case.

In Humble Gratitude

We the children and family of the late

†Beatris Sablan Reyes

wish to express our sincerest and heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to our families, relatives and friends for your thoughtful expression of love, sympathy, prayers and personal assistance and support during the difficult time of sorrow in the painful passing of our beloved mother †Beatris into the hands of our Heavenly Father.

Our sincerest gratitude to Bishop Tomas A. Camacho, and to the clergy of Kristo Rai, Father Jesse Reyes and Father Glenn Ragsag who assisted in the Eucharistic Celebration and interment rites. Thank you to the altar services, our appreciation of the Kantaye Kristo Rai choir and most especially to Vic and Marcy Cepeda, Margaret Dela Cruz and Frank Cabrera.

We would like to acknowledge Dr. Aldan of Saipan Health Clinic, Dr. Arcillia, CHC staff and Marianas Health Services who attended to our beloved mother with their utmost care and compassion.

To all who have supported us in one way or another, for your presence gave us the strength and courage to bear the passing of our beloved mother. As you have remembered our mother in your prayers, likewise, we will always remember you and your loved ones in ours.

MAY GOD BLESS US ALL.

THANK YOU AND SI YUUS MAASE

THE FAMILY

CELEBRITY EXTRA

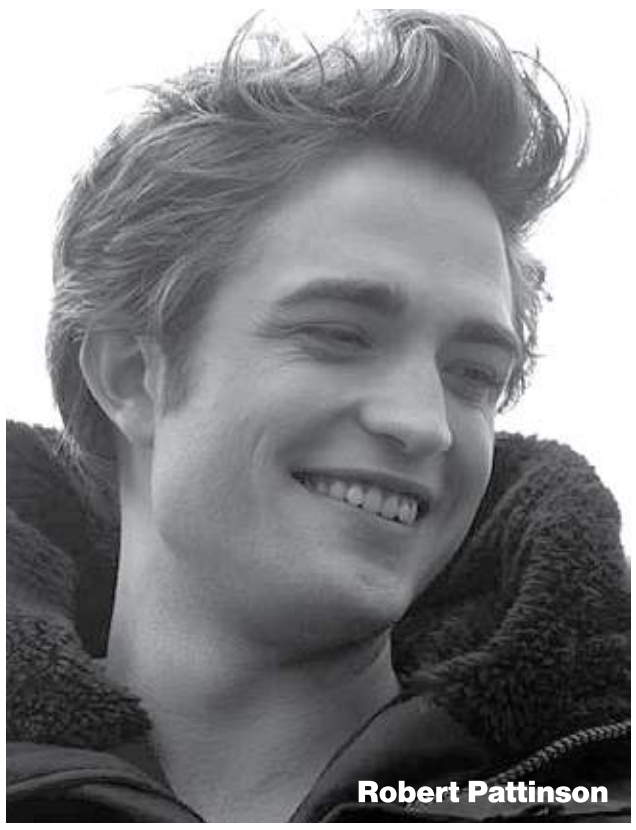
By CINDY ELAVSKY
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: I was wondering what the actor who played Cedric Diggory in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" has been doing. I haven't really seen him in anything lately. -- Deidre, Hamilton, Ohio

A: You soon will start seeing a lot of Robert Pattinson, 22, as he landed the starring role in the movie version of "Twilight," the first in a series of vampire books by author Stephenie Meyer. He plays Edward Cullen, the devastatingly handsome vampire who, against his nature, falls in love with a human, Bella Swan. "Twilight" hits theaters on Dec. 12. Robert also stars in the award-winning independent movie "How to Be," about a young man going through a quarter-life crisis. He has almost wrapped production on 2009's "Little Ashes," a movie about the life and loves of Salvador Dali. Robert will play the young Dali.

***

Q: I have seen Gary Sinise in movies and on TV shows, and he resembles DeForest Kelley, who played Bones on the original "Star Trek" series. Are they related? How old is Gary? It seems like he has been acting for quite some time. -- Sharon G., via e-mail


Robert Pattinson

A: Gary Sinise, 53, has been acting since high school, when he was cast in "West Side Story." In 1974, he co-founded the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. Gary started gaining recognition outside of theater when he co-starred with John Malkovich in "Of Mice and Men" in 1990. He then went on to his breakout role in 1994 as Lt. Dan in "Forrest Gump." Since then, he has starred in numerous film and TV roles. Currently he stars as Detective Mac Taylor on "CSI: NY." He is no relation to DeForest Kelley.

■ ■ ■

Q: Earlier this year, we watched Masterpiece Theater when it had Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" on. Who played the character of Mr. Darcy? He was a good actor and very handsome. I've seen him in something before, but can't remember what. -- Jeanette W., via e-mail

A: British actor Colin Firth, 47, captured the heart of many American women when this miniseries originally aired in 1995. Since then the dashing Englishman has gone on to star in "Bridget Jones's Diary," "Love Actually" and the current blockbuster summer hit, "Mamma Mia!" Colin has three children: a son with actress and former-girlfriend Meg Tilly, and two sons with wife Livia Giuggioli.

■ ■ ■

Q: Was David Hasselhoff on "The Young and the Restless" a long time ago as Jill Foster's brother? -- Flo G., Newark, Del.

A: From 1975-1982, David played Dr. William "Snapper" Foster Jr., who was the adopted brother of Jill Foster Abbott. This was David's big break in Hollywood, and he went on to star in (most notably) "Knight Rider," "Baywatch" and "Baywatch Nights." He also has had a prolific music career, mainly in Europe. Now you can see him as a judge on the reality show "America's Got Talent."

Have a question for Cindy? E-mail her at letters@cindyelavsky.com, or write to her in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

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Bangkok Dangerous

Friday		4:05	7:00	9:50
Saturday	1:00	4:05	7:00	9:50
Sunday	1:00	4:05	7:00	
Mon thru Thurs		4:05	7:00	

Nicolas Cage, Shahkrit Yamnarm
Action, Thriller, Sci-Fi • Rated R

Synopsis
The life of Joe, an anonymous assassin, takes an unexpected turn when he travels to Thailand to complete a series of contract killings. Joe, a remorseless hitman, is in Bangkok to execute four enemies of a ruthless crime boss named Surat. He hires Kong, a street punk and pickpocket, to run errands for him with the intention of covering his tracks by killing him at the end of the assignment. Strangely, Joe, the ultimate lone wolf, finds himself mentoring the young man instead whilst simultaneously being drawn into a tentative romance with a local shop girl.

★ ★ ★

Babylon A.D.

Friday		4:00	7:10	9:35
Saturday	1:15	4:00	7:10	9:35
Sunday	1:15	4:00	7:10	
Mon thru Thurs		4:00	7:10	

Vin Diesel, Michelle Yeoh
Drama, Thriller, Sci-Fi • Rated PG 13

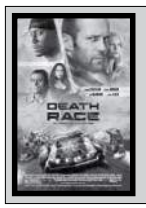
Synopsis
It is the not-too-distant future. Thousands of satellites scan, observe and monitor our every move. Much of the planet is a war zone; the rest, a collection of wretched way stations, teeming megalopolises, and vast wastelands punctuated by areas left radioactive from nuclear meltdowns. It is a world made for hardened warriors, one of whom, a mercenary known only as Toorop, lives by a simple survivor's code: kill or be killed. His latest assignment has him smuggling a young woman named Aurora from a convent in Kazakhstan to New York City.

Traitor

Friday		4:10	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:20	4:10	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:20	4:10	7:25	
Mon thru Thurs		4:10	7:25	

Don Cheadle, Guy Pearce
Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
When straight arrow FBI agent Roy Clayton heads up the investigation into a dangerous international conspiracy, all clues seem to lead back to former U.S. Special Operations officer, Samir Horn. A mysterious figure with a web of connections to terrorist organizations, Horn has a knack for emerging on the scene just as a major operation goes down. The inter-agency task force looking into the case meets with Carter, a veteran CIA contractor who seemingly has his own agenda and Max Archer, a fellow FBI agent.



Death Race

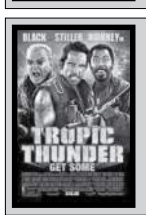
Friday		4:30	7:20	9:55
Saturday	1:25	4:30	7:20	9:55
Sunday	1:25	4:30	7:20	
Mon thru Thurs		4:30	7:20	

Jason Statham, Tyrese Gibson
Action, Thriller • Rated R

Mirrors

Friday		4:25	7:30	9:45
Saturday	1:30	4:25	7:30	9:45
Sunday	1:30	4:25	7:30	
Mon thru Thurs		4:25	7:30	

Kiefer Sutherland, Paula Patton
Thriller, Horror • Rated R



Tropic Thunder

Friday		4:20	7:15	10:00
Saturday	1:10	4:20	7:15	10:00
Sunday	1:10	4:20	7:15	
Mon thru Thurs		4:20	7:15	

Ben Stiller, Jack Black
Comedy • Rated R

The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor

Friday		4:15	7:05	9:30
Saturday	1:05	4:15	7:05	9:30
Sunday	1:05	4:15	7:05	
Mon thru Thurs		4:15	7:05	

Brendan Fraser, Jet Li
Action, Adventure • Rated PG 13

● NO PASSES ■ NO PASSES OR SUPER SAVERS

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www.gohollywood.com

Jill Jackson's HOLLYWOOD

HOLLYWOOD—Word is that Brad and Angelina are having a bit of trouble with their brood all clamoring for their affection. No trouble with aid in other directions; their list of hired help is UNBELIEVABLE. There are four nannies, two "gofers," two business assistants, two cooks, three maids, a doctor in a nearby hotel, a maintenance man and four bodyguards. All this at their chateau in Paris. And now Angelina has announced she wants to adopt two more babies to bring the total of bambinos up to eight. She will go to foreign countries to find these underprivileged children. And when, I ask, will the Pitts ever again find time to make a movie?

Love is more than "in bloom" for Orlando. It's a happening. The star of "Pirates of the Caribbean" has proposed to and been accepted by Australian model Miranda Kerr. The couple are planning a Buddhist wedding around Christmastime. They will live in New York and are already spending their spare time house or apartment hunting. If you recall, Orlando was once in love with Kate Bosworth, and everyone thought that would end up in marriage, but obviously they thought wrong.

Seems like Sylvester Stallone is "into" real estate. The muscle man has bought two parcels of land in the San Fernando Valley in an area called Lake Sherwood. (Yes, there are lakes in the valley.) One parcel is vacant, so he can build on that. The other has a house on it, which he will no doubt tear down so he can build one big mansion. At the moment Sly and his entourage reside in Beverly Hills, the posh area of L.A. ... AND did you know that Sly's characters Rocky Balboa and John Rambo have become a part of the pop-culture lexicon? The Philadelphia Museum steps are now known as "the Rocky Steps," and hundreds of tourists visit and walk the steps every day.

From where I sit (and that chair was recently rocked by that earthquake), it looks like Johnny Depp will be changing his pirate costume for that of the Riddler. Word is he will play the Dark Knight's nemesis in the next Batman film. Meanwhile, he keeps reading scripts for future productions. At the moment he is sporting a mustache and a small beard. He goes about many places unnoticed.

Aside to Beth W. of New Orleans, I don't know too much about Pamela Anderson. By that I mean "stuff" you can't read in books or find on the computer. But yes indeedy, she has had implants and doesn't try to hide them. She was born in Comox, Canada in 1967. She married Tommy Lee, and also was with Kid Rock. Besides acting, she writes poetry (although I have never seen any published) and fairy tales. And surely you know she has been a Playboy Playmate and starred in "Baywatch."

■ ■ ■

BITS 'N' PIECES: Yup. That was Julia Roberts sans bambinos taking a walk alone along the beach at Malibu. ... When I lived at the famed Chateau Marmont Hotel, it was a staid and quiet hostel. Today it has been taken over by rock musicians and loud partygoers, and is the focus for the likes of Mary Kate and Ashley, Lindsay, Paris and etc. ... And did you know that Marlene Dietrich played herself in "Follow the Boys," Greta Garbo played herself in "A Man's World," Barbara Stanwyck played herself in "Hollywood Canteen," and Joan Crawford played herself in "It's a Great Feeling"?

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Angelina Jolie

Judge nixes claims in Heath Ledger tape lawsuit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A judge on Wednesday dealt a serious but possibly temporary blow to a lawsuit filed by a celebrity magazine reporter who has accused a paparazzi agency of secretly filming Heath Ledger doing drugs in her hotel room.

Superior Court Judge John S. Wiley Jr. tentatively dismissed 11 of 12 claims filed against the agency and two photographers, saying most of the allegations lacked legal standing. He allowed attorneys to file an amended complaint that could restore some of the claims.

The woman, identified in court documents only as "Jane Doe," sued Splash News & Picture Agency and two of its photographers in April, alleging fraud, intrusion, unjust enrichment and other claims over the filming of Ledger in 2006.

AP

This Nov. 13, 2007 file photo shows actor Heath Ledger attending a special Cinema Society and Hogan hosted screening of "I'm Not There" at the Chelsea West Cinemas, in New York.

The woman was on assignment for People magazine at the time.

According to the lawsuit, the tape was made after the Golden Globe awards in January 2006 and wasn't revealed until after Ledger's death from an accidental prescription drug overdose earlier this year. "Entertainment Tonight" and its sister show, "The Insider," had planned to air the footage, but canceled those plans after feeling pressure from publicists and other Ledger supporters.

The video later surfaced online.

The lawsuit states the video was shot from a balcony of the reporter's hotel room, and that Ledger became upset when he realized he was being taped. The photographers placated Ledger by telling him they would destroy the tape, the suit claims.

Mara Buxbaum, a publicist who represented Ledger, did not return a phone call or e-mail seeking comment.

Ledger—who has been celebrated this summer for his role as the Joker in "The Dark Knight"—was already an established actor when the tape was made. Indeed, the suit claims the video was shot hours after Ledger appeared at the awards show, where he was nominated as best actor for "Brokeback Mountain."

The lawsuit claims the video shows Ledger doing cocaine and that some of the drugs were supplied by the photographers.

The reporter's likeness is blurred on the video.

That element, and the woman's assignment for People, were key reasons for Wiley's decision to remove most of the claims from the suit.

"Jane Doe is as far as the Heath Ledger public is concerned, a complete unknown," Wiley said. "She's not a feature. She's some blurry bystander."

Wiley also noted that the reporter had dated one of the photographers, and that the alleged intrusion of her privacy took place in a hotel room she had apparently rented to conduct interviews in. "It's a professional setting, not a personal setting," Wiley said.

The judge sided with defense attorneys, who argued that the woman could not make many of her claims on behalf of Ledger. "The tape's valuable because of Heath Ledger, not because of Jane Doe," Wiley said.

Neville Johnson, who is representing the reporter, told Wiley his client was also harmed by the video.

"It ruined her," he shouted at one point during the hearing. "She didn't get a story out of it."

The woman's suit claims her inclusion on the tape has damaged her ability to work.

"Just because she's a member of the press, she has the same rights as anyone else," Johnson said.

He said after Wednesday's hearing that he thinks a revision of the lawsuit will restore many of the reporter's claims.

An attorney for Splash News and its photographers declined to comment after the hearing.

If NPR speaks to you, thank 'The Host Whisperer'

By PAUL FARHI
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—David Candow, the man who makes National Public Radio sound like National Public Radio, has a simple piece of advice for anyone who wants to get in front of a microphone: Try to sound like ... you.

Don't try to imitate the worldly sophistication of NPR icon Robert Siegel, or the next-door-neighbor chumminess of NPR's Susan Stamberg. And forget about trying to echo the likes of quirky hipster host Ira Glass. Because you'll probably fail. But you can be the "best prepared you," he says.

Of course, as Candow well knows, "you" still needs some work. Sounding natural and easy-going on the air can take years of practice. It's like Fred Astaire's dance moves or the "perfect" golf swing—they seem effortless, if you forget all the effort that went into making it seem that way.

THE WASHINGTON POST

David Candow, the man who makes National Public Radio sound like National Public Radio, has a simple piece of advice for anyone who wants to get in front of a microphone: Try to sound like … you.

This is where Candow comes in. The Canadian-born consultant is one of the most sought-after vocal training specialists in the English-speaking world, a kind of Henry Higgins to broadcasting's Eliza Doolittles. Over the past two decades, Candow, 68, has coached hundreds of broadcasters on how to write for, and speak on, the air.

Candow's most prominent client is NPR, with which he started working in 1995. Almost all of NPR's most prominent voices have been through Candow's training sessions, and some several times. His knack for bringing out the most emotive, evocative and distinctive qualities in NPR's journalists has earned him guru status around the network's Washington headquarters and an affectionate nickname: "the Host Whisperer."

Candow usually begins his work not by lecturing but by listening. He pays close attention not just to what his students say,but to nonverbal cues like pitch, pace, volume, rhythm. All of it makes an impression. A little bend in a word here, a pause mid-sentence, even standing or sitting can affect the way someone sounds, he says.

Candow gives a crude demonstration. Turning to his interviewer, he asks, "How are you today?" His tone is flat and affectless. The question falls dead almost as soon as it leaves his lips.

"How are *you* today?" he says next. The emphasized word pumps concern and sympathy into the question.

"How *are* you today?" he says. Now his tone is insinuating.

It sounds a bit like acting, but that's the wrong idea. Candow says acting is when you pretend to be someone else; his goal is to make you a better you. "You have to own it. You've got to make it your own," he says repeatedly.

Candow counsels his clients to write for the ear, not the page. Too often, he says, his clients respect the written word at the expense of the way real humans talk. He hates it, for example, when he hears a host or forecaster tease a weather report by saying, "You're going to get two inches of the white stuff tonight."

" 'White stuff'?" he sputters. "It's *snow*! And 'you're going to get'? Where does the weatherman live? He's going to get it, too."

So, he advises using words common in conversation, and keeping the sentences short and declarative. His rule of thumb: Scripts should have no more than one thought per sentence, and no more than one sentence per line. Compound sentences are "too hard on the ear."

One more thing to remember: In radio, "the big adjective is a verb."

A verb is an adjective?

What he means is that a single punchy verb can describe someone better than a string of flowery adjectives. For example, Candow recalls a radio story about a 105-year-old woman named Alice. The reporter told her listeners that upon their first encounter, Alice "flits" into the room. "Flits!" repeats Candow. That one verb is "more powerful than any description I can make up."

During a recent two-day training session at NPR's D.C. headquarters, Candow's lessons began to hit home for Ari Shapiro, a reporter and substitute host on such programs as "Morning Edition" and "Talk of the Nation." After taking Candow's counsel, Shapiro struck the word "blaze" from a script he'd written, substituting the word "fire." Another reference to "numerous residents" became "a lot of people in town."

AP

In this May 28, 2008 file photo, CBS "Evening News" anchor Katie Couric, center, NBC "Nightly News" anchor Brian Williams, left, and ABC "World News" anchor Charles Gibson, right, are interviewed on the NBC 'Today' show in New York.

Network's anchor trio join cancer fight

NEW YORK (AP)—Katie Couric, Charles Gibson and Brian Williams have something in common besides their jobs: Each has lost loved ones to cancer—which gives them something in common with nearly everybody.

The evening news anchors are planning to join dozens of A-list entertainers and sports figures on "Stand Up to Cancer," a live, one-hour special being simulcast at 8 p.m. EDT Friday on ABC, CBS and NBC, as well as cable's E! Entertainment channel.

Besides seeking contributions to finance cancer research, the program will attempt to make the subject of cancer "not fun," said Couric, "but maybe a little bit entertaining - as well as educational and informative."

CBS' Couric and her news comrades will handle the information part, with each providing a 2 1/2-minute progress report on research efforts.

"We're on the cusp of many exciting breakthroughs," Couric said. "We'll have three examples of that."

Her segment will highlight new treatment for medulloblastoma, a malignant brain tumor that commonly targets children.

ABC News' Gibson will report on breast cancer, he said, "because my wife has gone through a bout of it." (She is now in recovery.) He added that cancer claimed the lives of his parents and sister.

"Cancer is a universal health threat," Gibson said, "something you need to keep in the public consciousness."

NBC News' Williams said his mother and sister died of cancer, which has put him on notice: "Given my family history, it's not a question of will I have cancer, but in what form and when."

As he looked ahead to Friday's special, Williams noted that networks had joined hands before for public-service simulcasts, but they were in response to disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"This is no less of an emergency," Williams declared.

The three anchors will be seen on "Stand Up to Cancer" not only in their taped segments, but also live from Los Angeles, where the program will originate with its throng of celebrities.

"We have an opportunity to galvanize people and make them care about an issue that affects so many, and is so devastating to families like mine," said Couric, whose husband and sister both died of cancer.

One of the driving forces of "Stand Up to Cancer," Couric has been an active fundraiser for cancer treatment and research since her husband, Jay Monahan, died of colon cancer in 1998.

The special, airing on the heels of back-to-back political conventions, could serve as a reminder that, so far, the presidential race has spurred little if any talk about fighting cancer.

Is it too late to bring that issue into the campaign?

"I'm not in a position to criticize other spending priorities," Williams replied, "but in an election, Americans get a say. Maybe cancer can still become part of our national discussion."

Family battling illness must learn to wash their hands

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: My sister-in-law, "Carol," doesn't wash her hands after changing diapers. I find it repulsive, and I can't help but cringe. I have also noticed that her kids don't wash their hands after using the bathroom—or any other time, for that matter—unless instructed to do so and closely watched. Even then, they don't use soap.

Carol wonders why her family is always sick. If I say anything to her, I'm sure she'll become defensive or dismiss it as the cause of their illness. Is there a polite, yet firm, way to say something?

INCREASINGLY GERMOPHOBIC, KENOSHA, WIS.

DEAR GERMOPHOBIC: The idea that Carol would change a diaper and then prepare meals for the family is, frankly, nauseating.

Sometimes there is no polite way to say something, so my advice is to be direct. There is a reason why hospitals constantly impress upon their staff the importance of washing their hands. Years ago, my mother described a poster she saw in the halls of a major hospital. It depicted a silhouette of two outstretched hands, fingers apart. The caption read, "The 10 most frequent causes of disease. Remember to wash your hands." Repeat this to your sister-in-law, and maybe she'll get the message.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm the unofficial event planner in my office. I am the one who makes sure people's birthdays are celebrated and comes up with occasional fun events like potlucks. Sometimes I buy everyone pizza (on the company) to keep morale up. I am not management, but I think doing this is important.

Last week my birthday came and went. Abby, not one person remembered! A co-worker from another department got me a card, but no one in my area even mentioned it. I am so bummed.

I remember everyone's birthday and make a big deal out of it with cakes and candles. I'm hurt that they forgot mine. It makes me want to stop being the party planner and do away with birthday celebrations altogether. Is this childish? Or should I just get over it and keep on keeping on?

CRUSHED IN OHIO

DEAR CRUSHED: You wouldn't be human if being overlooked didn't "smart." However, it's possible that because you have assumed the responsibility of arranging the birthday recognition, that everyone depends on you to let them know when one is coming up.

Because this can be awkward when the birthday being celebrated is your own, in the future, why not post a monthly calendar in your office with the various birthdays written in -- including yours? Also, because you were forgotten this year, tell someone besides me! Guilt can work miracles.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband has a checking account with his daughter-in-law. I have told him that I don't like it and feel that it is disrespectful, but he refuses to change it. We do not have a joint account. How should I take this?

MISTREATED IN MICHIGAN

DEAR MISTREATED: This is hardly a vote of confidence in your fiscal responsibility. I'm sorry you didn't elaborate further on the financial arrangements in your marriage. I, too, wonder why he would want his daughter-in-law to have access to his money while keeping it out of your reach.

However, because you signed your letter "Mistreated," it appears you have more problems in your relationship than money, and perhaps if you work those out, the money issue will resolve itself.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Akon plans on trial in New York fan-toss case

FISHKILL, N.Y. (AP)—Akon is headed to trial on criminal charges he tossed a fan offstage at an upstate concert last summer. The 35-year-old singer is accused of tossing a teenager off the stage during a June 2007 concert at a minor league baseball stadium near Poughkeepsie. Another concertgoer said she suffered a concussion when the boy landed on her.

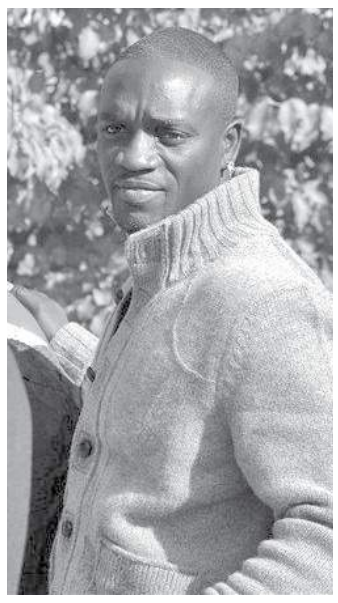
Akon, whose real name is Aliaune Thiam, asked for the jury trial during a brief appearance with his lawyer in Fishkill Town Court on Wednesday. He's due back in court for trial Dec. 1 unless a deal is negotiated in the meantime.

He pleaded not guilty in December to misdemeanor charges of endangering the welfare of a minor and second-degree harassment, a violation.

In court Wednesday, Judge Harold Epstein met privately with Akon's lawyer, Andrea Zellan, and Dutchess County Assistant District Attorney Anthony Parisi before announcing the case would go to trial unless a deal is reached.

"We are pleased that Judge Epstein adjourned the case to a date certain for either a trial or a negotiated resolution," Zellan said in a prepared statement. "Akon looks forward to putting this incident behind him, and in the meantime he will continue to meet every requirement set forth by the court."

Akon's hits include "Smack That" with Eminem and "I Wanna Love You" with Snoop Dogg. His most recent album, "Konvicted," was nominated for four Grammy Awards.



Hip-hop star Akon, walks out of Fishkill Town Court early Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008, in Fishkill, N.,Y. Akon, accused of tossing a teenage boy off the stage during a June 2007 concert at a minor league baseball stadium near Poughkeepsie, asked for a jury trial Wednesday.

AP

Aguilera does exclusive deal with Target

AP

Singer Christina Aguilera poses at her "Inspire" fragrance launch at Macy's on Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2008 in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—Christina Aguilera has become the latest musical act to release an album exclusively through one retailer.

The multiplatinum singer announced Wednesday that her greatest hits CD "Keeps Gettin' Better—A Decade of Hits" will be released only at Target. The CD, out Nov. 11, will feature two new songs as well as rerecorded versions of two other hits, "Genie in a Bottle" and "Beautiful."

"I can't believe it's been over 10 years since my first album and it was really exciting to put all of my favorite songs in one collection for my fans," said Aguilera in a statement.

Aguilera is following a growing list of acts who have struck exclusive deals with retailers. Wal-Mart has had huge success with similar deals with The Eagles, Journey, and Garth Brooks; AC/DC's October release of "Black Ice" will be available only at Wal-Mart, its affiliated Sam's Club and the band's Web site. The Eagles comeback album, "Long Road Out of Eden," was the third-best selling CD of 2007 with 2.6 million copies sold.

Target exclusively released John Legend's "Live from Philadelphia" in January and has had other exclusive releases of special edition albums by the likes of Alicia Keys and Carrie Underwood.

Kiss bassist Gene Simmons sued over IndyCar deal

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A Los Angeles man claims in a lawsuit that Gene Simmons took him for a ride on a marketing deal with the Indy Racing League.

Allan Brown on Wednesday sued Simmons and two business partners, claiming the group cut him out of a 2006 deal between the Kiss bassist and the racing league.

Brown is seeking unspecified damages and is claiming fraud and slander. His suit alleges he helped broker the deal between Simmons and the IRL, but was cut out of the contract while on a personal vacation.

He also claims Simmons and his business partners mischaracterized him as "lazy" and "rich" to racing league officials.

Simmons promoted IndyCar racing in 2006, and even co-wrote a song, "I Am INDY."

An e-mail message left for Simmons' attorney was not immediately returned Wednesday.

In this July 26, 2008 file photo, Kiss bassist Gene Simmons is shown during a pre-race news conference for the IndyCar Series auto race, in Edmonton, Alberta.

AP

AP

Mackenzie Phillips, of the 1970's sitcom "One Day at a Time, " appears on the the NBC "Today" television program in New York, when the cast was reunited Tuesday Feb. 26, 2008.

Mackenzie Phillips charged with drug possession

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mackenzie Phillips was charged Wednesday with felony possession of drugs for allegedly carrying narcotics at Los Angeles International Airport.

District attorney's spokeswoman Jane Robison said the former teen star was charged with two felony counts of possession of a controlled substance, heroin and cocaine.

She was arrested last week at the airport after failing a security screening while trying to catch a flight to New York. A secondary search turned up needles and suspected drugs, authorities said.

Phillips' attorney, Blair Berk, told a judge Wednesday that the actress has entered rehab.

She also faces a misdemeanor count of unauthorized possession of a needle or syringe.

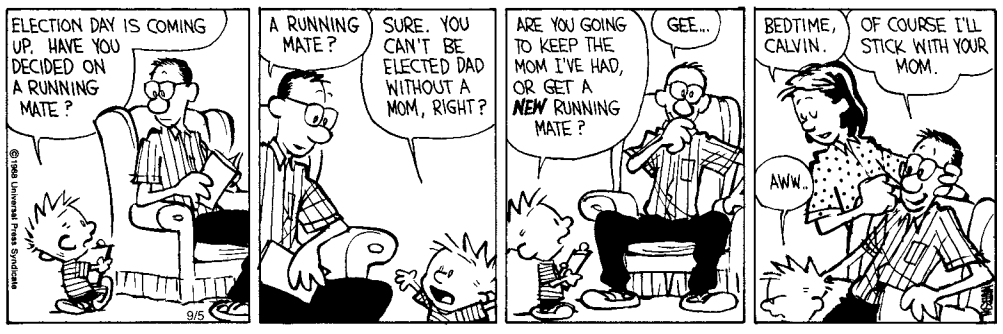
Phillips, 48, is out on $20,000 bail and is scheduled to be arraigned Oct.3.

She is the daughter of John Phillips, founder of the Mamas and the Papas pop group. She was fired from "One Day At a Time" in 1982 for drug-related reasons.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


ELECTION DAY IS COMING UP. HAVE YOU DECIDED ON A RUNNING MATE?
A RUNNING MATE?
SURE. YOU CAN'T BE ELECTED DAD WITHOUT A MOM, RIGHT?
ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP THE MOM I'VE HAD, OR GET A NEW RUNNING MATE?
GEE...
BEDTIME, CALVIN.
OF COURSE I'LL STICK WITH YOUR MOM.
AWW...
© 1989 Universal Press Syndicate
9/5

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO DANCING SATURDAY NIGHT, JON?
WOULD I?!
WOULD I?
AS LONG AS I DON'T HAVE TO WATCH
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www.garfield.com
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
JIM DAVIS 9-5

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

DADDY, HOW WAS YOUR FIRST WEEK OF WORK WITH US BACK IN SCHOOL?
I DIDN'T GET MUCH WORK DONE. YOUR AND YOUR BROTHER'S PRESENCE WAS STILL STRONGLY FELT.
THE KEYS TO THE KEYBOARD STILL STICK?
YES. NO MORE EATING AT THE COMPUTER— ESPECIALLY HONEY SANDWICHES.
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WWW.GOCOMICS.COM
9/5
Brian Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?
"24."
IT'S A SHOW WHERE EVERYTHING TAKES PLACE IN REAL TIME, MINUTE BY MINUTE OVER A TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR PERIOD.
WHAT'S THIS EPISODE ABOUT?
I DON'T KNOW. THE HERO'S BEEN IN THE BATHROOM FOR THE PAST TWENTY MINUTES.
Glenn McCoy
www.gocomics.com
9/5

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Church seat
4 Boom times
7 "Jezebel" Oscar winner
12 Genetics abbr.
13 Total
14 "Oh, woe!"
15 Tourists' haven
16 "Roots" author
18 Seek restitution
19 Swing around madly
20 "— Congeniality"
22 Coffee-shop vessel
23 Complaint
27 Upper limit
29 First name of 35-Across
31 Mystery writer's award
34 Be a glutton
35 "It's a Wonderful Life" hero
37 Weep loudly
38 IT measure
39 Lubricate
41 Symbol of servitude
45 Looked lecherously
47 Luau bowlful
48 "When My Baby Smiles at Me" star
52 Work unit
53 WWII sub
54 Leading lady?
55 "Go, team!"
56 Top of the world?
57 Roulette bet
58 Pismire

DOWN
1 Spectrum creator
2 Boredom
3 Fades away
4 Colo. Spgs. grp.
5 Approach the curb
6 Slander
7 Wonka creator
8 Carte lead-in
9 Actor Kilmer
10 Lemieux milieu
11 The air up there
17 Sign: ped —
21 1-to-10, often
23 Type of prize
24 Mess up
25 Early bird?
26 Retainer
28 Is multiplied?
30 Id counterpart
31 Recede
32 Rotation duration
33 "Skedaddle!"
36 Boo Boo's mentor
37 Record jacket
40 Less healthy
42 Phantom's bailiwick
43 Islamic Bible
44 Square-dance group
45 Inauguration recitation
46 Turned blue?
48 Dark brown-gray
49 Blood-typing letters
50 Neither mate
51 Not "dis"

Solution time: 25 mins.

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S	O	F	T	S	O	A	P		E	A	S	Y
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B	O	X	T	O	P		R	U	T			
U	R	I		M	U	G		F	I	S	T	S
L	E	N	D		P	E	G		C	H	O	W
L	O	G	I	C		T	A	J		A	G	A
			G	O	A		T	O	P	D	O	G
D	O	G	G	O	N	E		L	E	O		
A	X	L	E		G	O	N	E	A	W	A	Y
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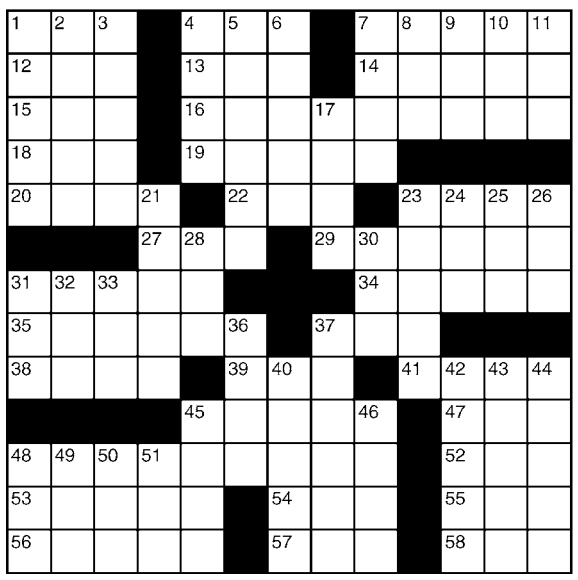
Yesterday's answer 9-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rose McGowan, 35; Dweezil Zappa, 39; Michael Keaton, 57; Cathy Guisewite, 58

Happy Birthday: Stop procrastinating. You've got the potential and the timing is right, so get off the couch and put some effort behind the good ideas you have. An opening is apparent that will allow you to secure a market that is waiting for what you have to offer. Stop dreaming and start achieving. Your numbers are 7, 13, 22, 30, 39, 47

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): A financial maneuver will put you in a better position momentarily but, if you use a dubious means to get to where you want to go, someone will speak up against you. Ethics will be of utmost importance. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Expect someone to hide something from you or lead you astray. You will have to nip quickly any misgivings that develop. Underhandedness will cause a breakup in an already shaky partnership. This is not the time to experiment. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Put your arrangements in order and invite everyone you enjoy to join in. A little romance will lead to a partnership that is above and beyond your expectations. Get your responsibilities out of the way early so they don't bog you down. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Choose your company wisely. Emotional issues can be cleared up once you recognize where you stand with those who oppose you. Wisely compromising will guide you back to a leadership position. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Emotions will be on the rise with the people you are closest to. Someone you live with may not get what it is you are trying to do. Don't let this person discourage you from moving ahead. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Your plans to do something enjoyable or take a trip will grab the attention of the ones you love. A break will allow you a moment to put your thoughts together and put your plans in place. Good things are just around the corner, so share your good fortune. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You'll be all over the map mentally. Try to harness what's most important to you and concentrate on accomplishing the most. A peer, colleague or someone you've worked with in the past will help you out now. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Pay attention to the one you love or you may end up in the middle of someone else's fury. A passionate encounter will be a much better way to spend your time. You can fit in the work objectives that will ease your stress and lead to success. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You don't need to be held back or stifled by other people's problems or their negativity. Falling for someone you work with will put you in a dangerous position. Make sure it won't jeopardize your status. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't expect anything to be stable today. A surprising change of plans or having someone try to outmaneuver you is likely. Put in extra hours in order to stay ahead of whoever is after your job. Don't trust a big talker making promises. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't listen to someone telling you that you can get away with something. You will be caught if you take a chance or neglect to do something you promised. Be strong and hold your ground. You'll prosper in the end. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Something you've been working on a long time will get the go-ahead. Don't be too eager to bank on what's supposed to happen. Bragging can be fun but, in this case, the fewer people who know what you are up to, the better. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a dreamer and have the potential and insight to make things happen. You are intense, secretive, playful and highly competitive.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

								8
	6		9	1	7		2	
						1	9	
	1				4			3
		3		9		5		
8			5				6	
	4	7						
	2		8	5	6		4	
1								

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 9/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	2	3	9	7	8	6	4	1
8	1	6	2	5	4	9	7	3
9	7	4	6	1	3	5	8	2
2	3	8	5	9	6	7	1	4
7	5	9	8	4	1	3	2	6
6	4	1	3	2	7	8	9	5
3	9	2	1	8	5	4	6	7
1	6	7	4	3	9	2	5	8
4	8	5	7	6	2	1	3	9

Difficulty Level ★★★ 9/04

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

A HAJJ TO MECCA **Solution: 11 letters**

E	T	F	H	S	A	S	M	S	Y	M	B	O	L	H
P	N	L	M	I	N	A	U	A	M	H	A	L	L	A
I	E	O	R	A	H	M	M	O	(P)	(A)	(C)	(E)	E	O
H	I	C	T	A	S	F	S	I	I	S	K	U	W	G
S	C	K	R	S	A	L	L	E	Q	G	Q	K	R	A
R	N	B	Y	W	N	L	A	S	R	S	I	A	A	T
O	A	S	A	L	A	O	L	U	O	V	M	L	D	H
W	A	T	E	R	B	A	I	M	T	P	I	E	E	E
S	M	E	L	R	D	M	L	S	S	I	N	C	T	R
L	O	O	T	N	M	A	E	S	S	I	R	G	E	I
L	D	I	A	U	U	O	E	S	O	E	R	I	H	N
I	G	S	S	N	O	N	N	J	S	O	C	U	P	G
H	N	L	N	U	E	R	U	P	U	A	E	O	O	S
N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M	P	L	E	V	A	R	T
M	K	M	O	E	G	A	M	I	R	G	L	I	P	P

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Abraham, Allah, Ancient, Annual, Assembly, Flock, Gatherings, Group, Hills, Idol, Islam, Joined, Kingdom, Makkah, Mina, Mosque, Mountain, Muslim, Oneness, Pace, Pilgrimage, Pillar, Processions, Prophet, Pure, Ramps, Religious, Rituals, Route, Sandals, Sash, Sermon, Service, Spiritual, Stone, Symbol, Tawaf, Tourism, Travel, Water, Well, Worship

Yesterday's Answer: Vacant

SALE: The topics of "Wonderword for Kids" appeal to younger fans but the puzzle-difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-6734, ext. 6688. **Sorry,** no online orders for this special offer.

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Guard files sex harassment suit vs principa
2 hurt in Puerto Rico vehicular crash. PA
There is still hope for nonimm
all alien workers in the CNMI who are appealing to U.S. lawmakers to retain the provision in the federalization bills that would grant nonimmigrant status to long-term alien workers.
In her message, expected to be read
during today's prayer vigil at the Ameri-can Memorial Park's Amphitheater, Doromal urged alien workers to "stand strong" as she vowed to continue sup-porting them "until the fight is won."
See DOROMAL on Page 4
joins Micronesia si
OPINION METER
This week's poll:
With what you know of the CUC situation, do you support the adoption of new regulatio
235- NEWS

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Serena beats Venus; Nadal reaches semi

NEW YORK (AP)—So little to separate them over their careers, so little to separate them on this night. Serena Williams barely got the better of older sister Venus Williams in a U.S. Open quarterfinal that was fit for a final, coming back in each set to win 7-6 (6), 7-6 (7) Wednesday and break a tie in their head-to-head series.

Serena trailed 5-3 in both sets. She faced set points in both—a total of 10, including eight in the second. But she advanced to the semifinals at Flushing Meadows for the first time since 2002, the year she beat Venus in the title match for her second U.S. Open championship.

"I felt like I was always in control," Venus said. "If it was someone else, I definitely feel like I would have won the match."

It was the siblings' 17th meeting as professionals, and Serena leads 9-8. That includes 11 matches at Grand Slam tournaments, where Serena leads 6-5.

She also has the edge in major championships, 8-7, and only she can add to that total this weekend.

"It's really just unfortunate it had to be in the quarters," Serena told the crowd, saying later: "I mean, I feel like I should have a trophy now."

In the semifinals, the fourth-seeded Serena will meet No. 6 Dinara Safina, who advanced earlier in the day by overpowering No. 16 Flavia Pennetta 6-2, 6-3. No. 2 Jelena Jankovic will face No. 5 Elena Dementieva in Friday's other semifinal.

Tough to imagine either of those contests could come close to producing the quality or competition managed Wednesday by a couple of sisters who grew up honing their strokes on the same court in Compton, Calif. Both played brilliantly. Venus smacked serves at up to 125 mph, Serena at up to 115 mph. They somehow returned those. They hit groundstrokes and volleys that would be the envy of nearly every other woman on tour. They chased down balls with "You thought that was a winner?!" defense.

AP

Serena Williams, right, of the United States, shakes hands with her sister Venus Williams, of the United States, after Serena won their quarter final match at the U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York, Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008.

In the end, they were separated by three total points, 101-98. Venus had an 8-7 edge in aces. Both double-faulted five times. Both broke serve twice.

"It was so intense," Serena said.

The seventh-seeded Venus had all sorts of chances to take control, but in the end, as both women's play reached a very high level, it was Serena who pulled through. In the second tiebreaker, Venus had four set points—and Serena saved them all.

"I'm a very good closer," Venus said, "so today was, um—I've never had a match like this in my life, so I guess there's always a first."

In contrast, when Serena earned her first match point, nearly 2 1/2 hours into the match, she converted it, when the Venus ended an 11-stroke exchange by missing a forehand.

"It was really luck for me, because she never makes those errors," Serena said.

Back when they were ranked Nos. 1 and 2, the siblings only could meet in tournament finals. But because of injuries, inactivity and inconsistency, they dropped in the rankings, and now it's the luck of the draw that determines at which stage they potentially meet.

At Wimbledon in July, for example, they wound up on opposite halves of the field, and Venus beat Serena in the final for her fifth title at the All England Club. At the U.S. Open, they wound up in the same section of the bracket, so the women many consider the two top players at the moment were forced to meet in the round of eight.

The start of the latest all-Williams showdown was delayed by more than an hour because of two lengthy matches that preceded it on the tournament's main court, including a women's doubles match and No. 6 Andy Murray's four-set victory over No. 17 Juan Martin del Potro in the men's quarterfinals.

The long day was capped by No. 1 Rafael Nadal's 3-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 win against unseeded American Mardy Fish in a quarterfinal that didn't even start until 11:30 p.m. and concluded with the scoreboard showing 2:10 a.m., making it the third-latest finish in tournament history. For Nadal, it was worth the wait: He reached the semifinals for the first time in six trips to the U.S. Open.

Venus showed up at the locker room about 20 minutes before she and her sister finally headed out, carrying a bunch of rackets in the crook of her left arm. Serena arrived about five minutes later, a red purse slung over her left shoulder.

Neither face betrayed the slightest hint of emotion, and those same expressionless masks were in place at the match's start. Early on, there were the sorts of nerves and erratic play—a combined seven first-set double-faults, for example—that have marked many of the siblings' encounters as they have adjusted to playing one another.

"I try not to look at her, because if I look at her, I might start feeling sorry," Serena told the crowd afterward.

Neither of their parents, who also serve as their coaches, were sitting in the guest boxes at Arthur Ashe Stadium. An older sister, Isha Price, was there, sitting with her hands clasped in front of her face, eyes shut, during the first-set tiebreaker.

How could she possibly cheer for one sister against another?

"I was stressed," she said. "It is so difficult to watch them. At the end of the day, you want them to play a good match and for the best person to win."

And did the best person win?

"I'm not sure," Price said.

The 23,763 spectators sitting in the packed stands had a hard time figuring out which Williams to support, too. When Venus missed a backhand wide on the match's first point, there wasn't a sound out there—no applause, no yelling, no booing. Nothing.

There wasn't much to separate the sisters' strokes on this night, either.

Down 6-4 in the opening tiebreaker, Serena reeled off four points in a row, saving two sets points and ending it when Venus pulled a forehand wide after a 10-stroke exchange.

Serena pumped a fist and yelled—exactly the way she would against any other opponent.

Venus wasted three set points when she served for the second set at 5-3, 40-love, and a fourth when Serena served while down 6-5.

Then came the second tiebreaker, which featured the point of the match. Serena tried a forehand passing shot but Venus stretched and put a volley into a corner. Serena got to that and flicked up a lob that wasn't good enough to get over the 6-foot-1 Venus, who pounded an overhead smash. Now the point was over, right? Nope. Serena got to that, too, stretching the exchange until Venus finally put away a volley to go ahead 5-2.

Take that, little sis!

Fans rose for a standing ovation.

Serena was left gasping for air.

Soon after, Venus was ahead 6-3.

But Serena won six of the last seven points.

"I can't say I was disappointed," Serena said. "You want the best for her, but in that situation you want to win, too."

Ravens quarterback Kyle Boller will miss season

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP)—Kyle Boller was placed on injured reserve Wednesday by the Baltimore Ravens, ending his season and raising the question of whether the quarterback will throw another pass for the team. Boller has been sidelined since hurting his shoulder in Baltimore's second preseason game against the Minnesota Vikings on Aug. 16.

"He has got either one of two injuries, either the torn labrum or he's got, I don't know the medical term, but there's a connection in the biceps to the shoulder that might be a problem," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "The torn labrum has not responded to the medication, and the other injury is a season ender. He's done."

Boller, selected with the 19th pick in the 2003 draft, was preparing for his sixth NFL season, all with Baltimore. He is in the final year of his contract, and it is uncertain if the Ravens will want to bring him back. Although Boller has started 42 games, his inconsistent play thrust him into a competition this summer with Troy Smith and rookie Joe Flacco to determine the starting quarterback.

Flacco won the job because of Boller's injury and Smith's lengthy battle with infected tonsils. Flacco will start Sunday against the Cincinnati Bengals, and his backup with be journeyman Todd Bouman, who was signed this week because Smith is not ready to return.

Boller was not available for comment. Since being drafted out of California, the 27-year-old completed 60 percent of his passes for a franchise-record 7,846 yards. But he has 45 touchdowns compared to 44 interceptions, and his uneven play was a factor in the Ravens' selection of Flacco as the 18th overall pick in this year's draft.

Still, Boller's teammates appreciate his love of the game and his effort to become a better quarterback.

"I've always said Kyle is my guy and I like him," receiver Derrick Mason said. "Regardless of what everybody else says, I think the guy can play football. To see him on IR now, and the hopes he had for playing this year, it's sad to see."

Tight end Todd Heap said, "He's obviously got to get his shoulder healthy. That's the first thing. It's unfortunate it had to happen this early in the season. He never got a chance to really get out and get on the field and do what he can do."

Heap, who has had his share of injuries, added, "That's football. Everybody goes through this. He's going to have to battle back from this one, get into the rehab and get healthy."

The injury means the Ravens must depend on Flacco, who was forced to start the final two preseason games because Smith and Boller were unavailable.

"Our mantra is next man up. If one guy goes down, we pride ourselves on being prepared. The second-tier players have to be prepared to play, and Joe is prepared to play," Mason said. "We've seen what Joe is able to do. On short notice, he had to play in the last preseason game and did very, very well."

Patriots' Brady participates in practice

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick expects Tom Brady to be ready Sunday for the season opener against Kansas City after the NFL's reigning MVP missed all four exhibition games.

"He's practicing this week and I expect he'll be ready to go," Belichick said Wednesday during a conference call with Kansas City reporters.

Asked if that meant that the quarterback, who has had an injured right foot, would play, Belichick said: "He's been practicing all week. I expect him to be out there today and I expect him to be out there the rest of the week."

Brady, who participated fully in practice Wednesday, said Monday the condition of his foot has improved and he could have played in all four exhibition games.

Wednesday's practice report listed the quarterback with right shoulder and foot injuries. But last year's practice reports listed him with the shoulder injury in every game and he started all of them. Brady has started 127 straight games, the third-longest streak by a quarterback in NFL history.

"If it's up to me, there's no question" that he would play against the Chiefs, Brady said Monday. "I've been getting progressively better over the past couple of weeks. I'm excited. I'm excited to start the year."

Oklahoma City's NBA team to be called Thunder

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Thunder can be heard from miles away, an early warning that a storm is about to arrive. So, perhaps it's only fitting that the name of Oklahoma City's NBA team didn't sneak up on anyone.

Six weeks after the name first surfaced, team officials officially announced Wednesday that the team formerly known as the Seattle SuperSonics would be known as the Oklahoma City Thunder.

"It's hard to keep a secret," team chairman Clay Bennett said after stepping to a podium on the ground floor of the downtown office building where the team is headquartered.

The announcement had long been anticipated, but everyone knew what was coming.

The local ABC affiliate reported in mid-July that Thunder had been chosen as the nickname. Then the NBA Web site listed NBA.com/thunder as a link to the Oklahoma City team's page. Then the Orlando Magic's site listed games against the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Even the logo and colors leaked out over the weekend. Then, prior to the 5 p.m. announcement, Thunder merchandise started showing up on the NBA's online store.

"I thought it was great fun. Maybe I have a warped sense of things," Bennett said. "I thought it was a lot of fun. I was disappointed in the image being released."

That left Bennett somewhat surprised that hundreds of people still showed up in the atrium of Leadership Square, watched from their office windows or leaned over a second-floor walkway to hear it for sure.

"My family talked about wanting to come down, and I said, `Well, I don't think it's that big a deal. Everybody seems to know the name already,'" Bennett said.

AP

Clay Bennett, chairman of the new Oklahoma City NBA franchise, unveils the team name, Thunder, and colors, in Oklahoma City, Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008.

To unveil the logo, six children joined players Desmond Mason and Damien Wilkins to pull down a curtain as the AC/DC song "Thunderstruck" blared over the loudspeaker. What was revealed was a large blue banner with the logo in the middle, and splashes of yellow at the top and reddish-orange at the bottom.

Bennett said the light blue color coincides with the state flag to represent the inclusion of all Oklahomans, the yellow refers to the sun and the reddish-orange color to the sunset. With the University of Oklahoma featuring crimson as its primary color, and Oklahoma State using orange, Bennett said it was "not too red and not too orange."

Thunder is a fitting moniker for the Oklahoma City franchise, not only as a reference to powerful storms in the area known as Tornado Alley. The Oklahoma City-based 45th Infantry Division carries Thunderbirds as its nickname, and that's a reference to the state's American Indian heritage. Even one of Oklahoma native Garth Brooks' biggest hits was "The Thunder Rolls."

"There's just all kinds of good thunder images and thoughts, and the in-game experience of Thunder," Bennett said. "Just here was a good sense of how that evokes emotion. It's very powerful."

The team name had been the most evident—and talked about—element missing after Bennett announced July 2 that the SuperSonics would be moving to Oklahoma City through an agreement that will have him pay the city of Seattle up to $75 million to settle a lawsuit.

Bennett said the uniforms and mascot won't be unveiled for another few weeks, but T-shirts, basketballs and other Thunder merchandise went on sale immediately after the announcement.

"The guys in the jerseys, if they play, the jerseys are going to look real good," coach P.J. Carlesimo said.

While the team applied for trademarks to six names—the others were Wind, Barons, Marshalls, Energy and Bison—Bennett said the decision on the name had been made "quite some time" ago. He said the names on the trademark applications weren't finalists, and he wouldn't reveal what other names got serious consideration.

General manager Sam Presti told the crowd designing a logo "takes an immense amount of work, and it does take some time.

"Not that anyone was really paying attention to the amount of time it was taking," he quipped.

Team officials said they hope they can make the qualities of character, perseverance, selflessness, community and winning synonymous with Thunder.

"It's very unique," said Mason, a former Oklahoma State forward who the Thunder acquired in an offseason trade with Milwaukee. "It's going to take some time getting used to, just like Utah Jazz or Orlando Magic, but I think it's a great thing for the state and a great thing for the city."

Chalmers, Arthur sent home from NBA rookie program

RYE BROOK, N.Y. (AP)—Former Kansas stars Mario Chalmers and Darrell Arthur were sent home Wednesday from the NBA's mandatory rookie transition program for violating unspecified league rules.

Both the Miami Heat, who acquired Chalmers in a draft-night trade, and agent Sam Goldfeder confirmed to The Associated Press that the guard left the program. Neither would divulge the reasons why the former Kansas standout, who hit the overtime-forcing jumper in the Jayhawks' win over Memphis in the national championship game five months ago, was asked to depart early from the resort in southern Westchester County, a short drive north of Manhattan, where the event was taking place.

"I'm in the process of investigating what exactly is going on," Goldfeder said.

The Heat said they also were investigating and declined further comment.

"The players were sent home for violating program rules," NBA spokesman Tim Frank said. "They will be appropriately sanctioned and will have to repeat the program next year."

Arthur, a 6-foot-9 forward who was chosen late in the first round by New Orleans, was traded three times on draft night and signed his rookie contract with Memphis in early July. The Grizzlies acknowledged Arthur "was sent home ... for violating program rules" but declined to give details.

"He will be sanctioned at a later date, and he will have to repeat the program next year," team spokesman Dustin Krugel said.

In addition to returning to the symposium in 2009, the former Jayhawks both may be facing a fine and suspension from the NBA.

Chalmers left Miami on Monday to begin the program, a four-day event which is required of all newcomers entering the league and focuses on issues such as life skills, handling finances, the importance of character and image, the difference between NBA and NCAA game rules, legal matters and dealing with media.

Chalmers is expected to compete for the starting point guard spot with the Heat when training camp begins later this month. He was drafted early in the second round by Minnesota and quickly traded to the Heat, who raved about his play in the Orlando summer league and signed him to a two-year deal.

"We really don't know all the facts yet, and I certainly would never comment publicly on any personal matter concerning any player I have ever coached," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "Beyond that, I can say that both Mario and Darrell were great to coach. They played a huge role in our success the past few years, in large part due to their unselfishness and the sacrifices they made for our program."

NBA BRIEFS

Spurs' Ginobili undergoes surgery on injured ankle

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—San Antonio Spurs guard Manu Ginobili had arthroscopic surgery to repair a ligament injury in his left ankle. The Spurs said Wednesday that the surgery in Los Angeles had gone well and Ginobili will be in a splint and on crutches for three weeks. Then, his rehabilitation schedule will be determined after his ankle is re-evaluated. The injury hobbled Ginobili during the NBA playoffs, particularly during the Western Conference finals against the Los Angeles Lakers. He was cleared to play for Argentina in the Olympics, but re-aggravated the injury during a game against the United States. An MRI taken last week showed no more damage but no improvement, setting up the need for the arthroscopic surgery. Ginobili averaged 19.5 points last season to lead the Spurs in scoring.

Marshall coming home to 76ers

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Donyell Marshall and the Philadelphia 76ers agreed to a one-year contract on Tuesday, the latest free-agent to join a team poised to make a run in the Eastern Conference. The 6-foot-9 Marshall averaged 11.4 points and 6.8 rebounds in 11 seasons and tied the NBA record for 3-pointers in a game with 12 against the Sixers in 2005. "Donyell Marshall has proven time and time again his value as a player in this league," 76ers president Ed Stefanski said. "We believe his ability to stretch defenses with his perimeter shooting will prove to be a great asset for our team and we look forward to having him back home in Philadelphia." Marshall was the fourth overall pick in the 1994 NBA Draft by Minnesota. He started last season with Cleveland before being sent to Seattle in a three-team trade in February. Seattle, now Oklahoma City, waived Marshall in August. The Sixers have been busy this summer after reaching the playoffs for the first time in three years. They signed two-time All-Star forward Elton Brand, added free-agent guards Royal Ivey and Kareem Rush, free-agent center Theo Ratliff, and re-signed two of their most important players to long-term contracts, guard Louis Williams and forward Andre Iguodala.

Heat sign free agent Magloire

MIAMI (AP)—The Heat signed former All-Star center Jamaal Magloire on Tuesday, four days after agreeing to basic terms with the nine-year veteran. The 6-foot-11, 265-pound Magloire has averaged 8.6 points and 7.2 rebounds in his career. He spent his first five seasons with the Charlotte and New Orleans Hornets, and has now been with five teams since the start of the 2005-06 season—Milwaukee, Portland, New Jersey, Dallas and now Miami. "He will dramatically support our post position," Heat president Pat Riley said. "He is an excellent rebounder with a big body. On the defensive end he will plug up the paint and the offensive end he can score. We feel that this is definitely the right place for him to re-energize his career." The Heat sought another big man this summer, in part because veteran Alonzo Mourning—who suffered a serious knee and leg injury last December—is not expected back before the regular season begins. Mourning has said several times he will cancel plans to retire if his body allows him to continue playing this coming season. Magloire averaged 1.8 points in 31 games last season with New Jersey and Dallas. His best season with 2003-04, when he averaged 13.6 points and 10.3 rebounds for New Orleans and earned his lone All-Star selection.

A-Rod's homer upheld by replay as Yankees beat Rays

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP)—Alex Rodriguez's ninth-inning homer was upheld in Major League Baseball's first use of video replay as the New York Yankees beat the division rival Tampa Bay Rays 8-4 on Wednesday.

Rodriguez, who went 3-for-4 and drove in four runs, hit a towering two-run shot off Troy Percival that third base umpire Brian Runge immediately ruled a homer when it bounced off the catwalk behind the foul pole in left field.

Rays catcher Dioner Navarro protested, bringing manager Joe Maddon out of the dugout. After convening, the umpires reviewed the tap and upheld the call.

Rodriguez had a run-scoring double in the third off Edwin Jackson (11-9) and an RBI single in the fourth. The home run was his 31st of the season and 549th of his career, breaking a tie for 12th place with Mike Schmidt on the MLB all-time list.

Red Sox 5, Orioles 4

At Boston, Baltimore reliever Jim Miller threw away a bunt for a game-ending error, handing Boston a comeback win from a four-run deficit.

Miller threw past third baseman Aubrey Huff and down the left-field line, allowing Boston's Alex Cora to jog in for the winning run.

Dustin Pedroia homered in the seventh inning to begin Boston's rally from a four-run deficit. Pedroia went 3-for-4 and raised his AL-leading average to .333. He is 21-for-34 (.618) in his last eight games.

White Sox 4, Indians 2

At Cleveland, Nick Swisher and Alexi Ramirez homered to help Chicago avert a three-game sweep against Cleveland.

Javier Vazquez (11-12) allowed two runs in six innings. He held the Indians scoreless until Jhonny Peralta's two-run double in the fifth.

After managing one hit in the first four innings, the White Sox scored four runs on five hits in the next two innings before Jeremy Sowers (2-8) was pulled with one out in the fifth. Swisher led off the fifth with a homer and Ramirez's two-run shot in the sixth made it 4-0.

Rangers 1, Mariners 0

At Arlington, Texas, Texas fill-in starter Dustin Nippert allowed seven hits in seven innings, and Milton Bradley hit a sacrifice fly in the first inning for the game's only run.

Felix Hernandez (9-9) gave up seven hits in 7 1-3 innings for Seattle.

It was the third 1-0 victory for Texas in 15 seasons at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington. The Rangers have seven shutouts this season.

Blue Jays 5, Twins 4, 11 innings

At Toronto, John McDonald singled home the go-ahead run in the 11th inning and Toronto beat Minnesota for the eighth straight time.

Scott Rolen doubled off Eddie Guardado (3-4) to begin the 11th and went to third when Travis Snider singled. Boof Bonser came on to face McDonald, who lofted a single to center over the drawn-in outfield.

Minnesota took a 4-3 lead with a two-out rally in the ninth against Toronto closer B.J. Ryan. Facing Twins closer Joe Nathan, the Blue Jays tied it in the bottom half.

Tigers 9, Angels 6

At Detroit, Placido Polanco had three hits and drove in three runs, and Mike Hessman homered for winner Detroit.

Mark Teixeira hit a home run for Los Angeles.

With the Tigers down 6-5 in the seventh, Brandon Inge led off with a single off reliever Jose Arredondo (7-2). Curtis Granderson tripled to tie the game and Polanco followed with a single to put Detroit on top.

Hessman hit his first homer, a two-run shot, in the eighth.

Astros 4, Cubs 0

At Chicago, Randy Wolf pitched a six-hitter for his eighth career shutout and the Houston Astros won their eighth straight over the Chicago Cubs, who lost their season-high fifth in a row.

The Astros completed a three-game sweep at Wrigley Field behind the pitching of Wolf and some good defense. Ty Wigginton hit his 22nd homer of the season and made a great throw from left field to cut down a potential Chicago run in the fifth inning.

It is Houston's second eight-game winning streak in less than a month, matching one from Aug. 7-14.

Wolf (9-11) earned his first shutout and complete game since April 2004.

Diamondbacks 4, Cardinals 3

At Phoenix, Adam Dunn doubled home the winning run in the ninth inning for Arizona.

For the second time in three games, the Diamondbacks rallied against the Cardinals' tattered bullpen, whose 29 losses are most in the majors.

Stephen Drew tripled to lead off the ninth against Chris Perez (2-2). One out later, Conor Jackson singled through the drawn-in infield to tie it. Dunn followed with a shot to the right field corner.

Mets 9, Brewers 2

At Milwaukee, Ryan Church hit a grand slam and Brian Schneider added a homer in New York's six-run first inning and the Mets completed the three-game sweep.

Oliver Perez (10-7) benefited from the highest-scoring first inning by the Mets in more than a year by scattering two runs, five hits and five walks until leaving in the seventh.

After an out, Dave Bush (9-10) gave up three straight singles, including an RBI hit by Carlos Delgado to make it 1-0, then walked Carlos Beltran to load the bases for Church. The Mets went up 6-0 with two outs when Schneider hit a solo homer, the first time since July 19, 2007 New York scored six or more runs in the top of the first.

Giants 9, Rockies 2

At Denver, Barry Zito pitched the win and Nate Schierholtz had a career-high four hits for San Francisco, which avoided a sweep by Colorado and ended a five-game losing streak.

Zito (9-16) allowed two runs and four hits in eight innings.

Scott McClain had three hits and hit his first major league homer, and Pablo Sandoval also homered for the Giants.

Marlins 5, Braves 3

At Miami, Hanley Ramirez homered and doubled to lead Florida in front of an incredibly sparse crowd.

Fewer than 600 people were in Dolphin Stadium for the first pitch. While the official attendance, based on tickets sold, was 11,211, the ballpark was so quiet that home-plate chatter could be heard.

Nationals 9, Phillies 7

At Washington, Cristian Guzman set a Washington franchise season record with his eighth consecutive multihit game, capping it with a bases-clearing double in the decisive eighth inning.

Guzman went 3-for-5 and had three RBIs. He is batting .538 (21-for-39) during a streak that has made him the first Washington-based player to get at least two hits in eight straight games in a season since Joe Cronin of the old Senators in 1933.

Ryan Howard homered twice for Philadelphia.

Pirates 6, Reds 5

At Cincinnati, Adam LaRoche snapped an 0-for-16 slump with two RBI singles to lead Pittsburgh.

With the score tied at 4 in the eighth, Nate McLouth led off with a single off Jeremy Affeldt (1-1). He stole second and continued to third when Affeldt's throw got past first baseman Joey Votto for a throwing error. Ryan Doumit walked and moved to second on a wild pitch, and LaRoche drove in McLouth with a soft single to right.

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DELIVERY

Washington joining SMB; Adducul back

MANILA, Philippines—Jay Washington, the potential superstar forward who didn't blossom into one in his first three years in the PBA, is expected to sign up with San Miguel Beer after returning from a vacation in the United States this weekend.

The versatile 6-foot-7 former Eckerd College star will be seeing action for his third team in a career that started in 2005 after being shipped to San Miguel by Talk 'N Text during Draft Day.

"He can't wait to play," said Charlie Dy, Washington's agent. "He's happy to be with San Miguel. He's excited and he hopes to be able to contribute to San Miguel's campaign (in the coming season)."

There were reports that Washington and Talk 'N Text coach Chot Reyes, who took over before the start of the last Fiesta Cup, didn't see eye to eye. But Washington still averaged more than 12 points and six rebounds a contest and finished 12th in the MVP race.

The 34th PBA season opens with the Philippine Cup on Oct. 4 and the trade could serve the Beermen well since the team will be without two-time MVP Danny Ildefonso, who went under the knife in the U.S. to remove bone spurs in both feet.

"That's why the trade made sense because we want somebody who can fill the void while Danny I is out," said San Miguel coach Siot Tanquingcen, who made it clear that they have no plans of trading away Washington.

In other PBA developments, Purefoods, according to team manager Rene Pardo, has 20 players practicing, a number of them trying out for slots in time for the opening next month.

Among them is Romel Adducul, the former RP Team stalwart who was recently cleared of nasopharyngeal cancer and is slowly but surely getting his old strength back.

Though no definite date has been scheduled for his comeback game, the 6-foot-6 native of Tuguegarao has been religiously joining team practices as the Tender Juicy Giants try to win a first title in two years. ***(PDI)***

ANICIA

From Page 44

team but was also given a chance to get on the court," she added.

Santos was a starter for the U.S. Youth National Team during their European tour.

Ancia was also a member of the U.S. Women's Volleyball Team that took part in this year's Junior Olympic Girls' Championships.

Though she admits she misses Saipan, especially its less-crowded beaches, she was thankful that her family moved to the U.S mainland.

"Had I not left Saipan at a younger age I believe I would not have been ready to seize that opportunity, but with such a solid background I was able to move on and create a life here that I can take to great levels," said Santos, who studied at Saipan Community School and Sister Remedios Preschool.

"Several years ago I would have never guessed how far I could have gone in this sport. I was a small island girl and to me Saipan was the world and I probably would never have left or had that opportunity if I had stayed. I am grateful for the culture I was brought up and the principles I learned early on on Saipan, such as respect, work ethic, and love for your family," she added.

When she finishes college, Santos looks forward to joining a professional team in Europe or playing in the AVP.

"Or perhaps even join the U.S. National Team," Santos said.

If Santos makes the team and the U.S. spikers qualify for the Olympics, Santos will be the first CNMI athlete to become an Olympian.

The CNMI is not a member of the Olympic family thus it can not send athletes directly to the quadrennial meet. A CNMI athlete can only play in the Olympics if he tries out for a U.S. team and gets selected.

The Commonwealth's membership to the Olympic family is considered a long shot due to its political union with the U.S.

HEO

From Page 44

reer singles record of 11-10 and 15-10 in doubles.

Heo, who made to the world ranking only this year, is currently at No. 1561 after losing his first match in the Hyogo International Junior Tournament. His best ranking was at No. 1425 in June this year. Heo competed in tournaments in Australia early this year to start getting ITF Junior ranking points, and also joined a competition in Korea.

The 16-year-old netter has a 1-4 record in singles this year and 2-3 in doubles. Overall, Heo holds a 1-7 record in singles and 2-6 in doubles.

Heo's debut in Japan resulted in a loss, as he bowed to Shintaro Imai in straight sets, 1-6, 3-6, last week.

The CNMI bet was playing hurt, as injuries on his ankle and legs have yet to heal. He sustained the injuries while playing in New Caledonia two months ago and they were aggravated in Fiji when he competed in the 2008 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships.

Heo also played in the doubles competition in Hyogo 1 and he and partner Issei Okamura lost to top seeds Yusuke and Kaisuke Watanuki in the first round, 1-6, 4-6.

The Watanuki siblings eventually won the doubles event and Kaisuke prevailed in the singles division.

The tournaments in Japan are Grade 5 events. This type of event offers the least ranking points and is used as an introduction to the ITF Junior Circuit. Grade A (including four Grand Slam events) tournaments has the most points. Grades B and C are for regional championships and international competitions, respectively.

THEA

From Page 44

"Games Interprovinciaux."

The tournament will feature junior players from New Caledonia's three provinces, which are represented by three associations, namely North of the Province Tennis, South of the Province Tennis, and the Provincial Islands Tennis. We Lifou will host the tournament, which will be held after a tennis camp next week.

CNMI coach Jeff Race in an earlier interview said that training at the New Caledonia camp is much tougher than the one at the Dr. Robin Mitchell Regional Training Center in Lautoka, and Minor will learn a lot from it.

Race said the training in New Caledonia starts as early as 5am and players practice three times a day with the last two held during lunch break and after school hours.

Minor is expected to hold her ground in the camp and in the actual tournament after training at RTC for more than month and playing two tournaments in Fiji.

The 13-year-old Minor competed and placed third in the 2008 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships and also finished third in the pool play in the Oceania Plate.

While her teammates returned to Saipan after the two tournaments in Fiji, Minor stayed in Lautoka to prepare for the competition in New Caledonia.

Her last week of training in Fiji focused more on footwork and mental preparations.

"She is doing well in her training in Fiji. The people at the training center are taking care of her," said Joy.

"We are very proud, happy, and excited for Thea for having an opportunity to compete in New Caledonia. This off-island competition will really help improve her game and confidence," the elder Minor said.

After the tournament in New Caledonia, Thea will return to Saipan late this month.

When asked if Thea will return to Fiji in the near future for a scholarship and to continue her training at RTC, Joy said she and her husband, Boyet, still need to discuss the matter with their daughter.

"We still need to talk to Thea if she wants to stay in Fiji for one year," Joy said.

Thea and CNMI top 18-and-under player Ji Hoon Heao received an invitation to train and study in Fiji for one year after their impressive performances in the POJC in the past two stagings of the annual tournament.

Thea made it into the semifinals of the POJC in 2007, earning a spot on the Pacific Touring Team, which competed in several tournaments in New Zealand in December last year.

Heo, who had back-to-back runner-up finishes in the POJC (2007-2008), was also part of the Pacific Touring Team and participated in tournaments in Australia early this year.

NMITF

From Page 43

Your partner runs to the bike and then rides past or "leapfrog" your partner and drops the bike at the next exchange point.

This process is repeated and the team that completes the course will win the race.

NMITF said a more challenging version would be scheduled at a later date this year.

Interested competitors must come with their own partner.

For the exchange point, the bike and run distances will be divided into 10 exchange points, each with a distance of about less than a mile.

Organizers will be marking the exchange points with cones and ribbons.

NMITF also gave some tips to win the race.

The basic strategy is to pick a partner that matches your ability in both biking and running.

Because both team members would be riding the same bike for the full course, both must fit the bike or they will be making seat adjustments on every exchange resulting in lost time.

It is also recommended that competitors must wear their running shoes and helmets are required to be used on all bike portions of the race.

NMITF said there would be awards for the top teams while all participants will have the chance to win attractive items through lottery.

The organizers did a trial as part of their preparation for the event.

Joshua and Mamiko Berger, Fred Camacho, Tamio, Ronald, and Shogo had a lot of fun for it though tiring.

Tyce Mister said he did it in college and found it an excellent workout.

Joshua Berger could be contacted at 235-8060 or Fred Camacho at 233-2265 for more details.

NMC

From Page 44

games in the regular season to beat PTI in the battle for the pennant. NMC and PTI finished the elimination round with identical 10-1 records, but the former won the tiebreak after downing the latter in their lone match in the regular season, 87-82.

Actually, NMC played half of one of its last two games Tuesday night, colliding with Autonomous. But the game was suspended due to a power outage with NMC ahead at halftime, 45-35.

Autonomous did not have enough players for the continuation of the match Wednesday night, giving NMC a free ride to its ninth win.

On the same night, NMC was to play the Commonwealth Ports Authority, but the latter also showed up for the game with only four players.

Meanwhile, the playoff round was set to start last night with the No. 3 seed Department of Community and Cultural Affairs facing the No. 6 pick Bank of Guam.

DCCA finished the regular season with an 8-3 record, while Bank of Guam had a 7-4 mark.

Other pairings in the first round of the double-elimination playoffs are NMC vs. Legislature, Department of Corrections vs. Autonomous, and PTI vs. Tinian.

Legislature caught the last bus to the playoff round with its 4-7 slate and will duel NMC on Monday.

Corrections and the defending champion Autonomous have similar 7-4 records, but the former claimed the No. 4 ranking having beaten the latter in the regular season. They will collide tonight at 6:30pm.

With NMC securing the pennant, PTI dropped to the No. 2 spot and will challenge 2006 inter-government champion Tinian on Tuesday. Tinian ended the regular season with a 6-5 record.

Three teams did not make it to the next round with Aguaguat and Department of Public Works/Procurement & Supply finishing the regular season with identical 3-8 records and CPA having a dismal 1-10 slate.

Twelve teams participated in the PTI caging, but Department of Public Safety pulled out from the league going into the last few weeks of the regular season.

League organizer Joey Dela Cruz said they will be holding one game per night in the playoffs for now, until the power situation gets better.

"It's better to schedule one game every night and finish it before the power goes out instead of having two games with the second one suspended midway through the match or in the last few minutes of the game. This happened a lot in the regular season," Dela Cruz said.

The league is expected to finish the season at the end of this month if it will continue with the one game per night schedule.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	84	53	.613	–
Boston	82	57	.590	3
New York	75	64	.540	10
Toronto	72	66	.522	12 1/2
Baltimore	63	76	.453	22

Central Division

Chicago	78	61	.561	–
Minnesota	77	62	.554	1
Cleveland	67	71	.486	10 1/2
Detroit	67	72	.482	11
Kansas City	58	79	.423	19

West Division

Los Angeles	84	54	.609	–
Texas	69	72	.489	16 1/2
Oakland	63	75	.457	21
Seattle	54	85	.388	30 1/2

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

New York	79	61	.564	–
Philadelphia	76	64	.543	3
Florida	71	69	.507	8
Atlanta	60	80	.429	19
Washington	54	86	.386	25

Central Division

Chicago	85	55	.607	–
Milwaukee	80	59	.576	4 1/2
St. Louis	75	65	.536	10
Houston	74	66	.529	11
Cincinnati	61	78	.439	23 1/2
Pittsburgh	59	79	.428	25

West Division

Arizona	71	68	.511	–
Los Angeles	70	70	.500	1 1/2
Colorado	66	75	.468	6
San Francisco	60	79	.432	11
San Diego	53	86	.381	18

Yesterday's Games

Chicago White Sox 4, Cleveland 2
Boston 5, Baltimore 4
Texas 1, Seattle 0
Detroit 9, L.A. Angels 6
Toronto 5, Minnesota 4, 11 innings
N.Y. Yankees 8, Tampa Bay 4
Oakland at Kansas City, ppd., rain
Florida 5, Atlanta 3
N.Y. Mets 9, Milwaukee 2
San Francisco 9, Colorado 2
Arizona 4, St. Louis 3
Washington 9, Philadelphia 7
Pittsburgh 6, Cincinnati 5
Houston 4, Chicago Cubs 0
L.A. Dodgers 6, San Diego 4

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

PTI Caging Standings (Final)

NMC	10	1
PTI	10	1
DCCA	8	3
DOC	7	4
Autonomous	7	4
Bank of Guam	7	4
Tinian	6	5
Legislature	4	7

Rotary Standings

Southern Sonics	3	0
G-Rollers I	2	0
CNMI Jr. Nationals	2	1
Kontenders	2	2
San Antonio Sixers	1	0
Suns	0	1
G-Rollers II	0	3
G-Stars	0	2
C.K. Saints	0	1

Events lined up for Saipan 2009 Sportsfest

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

It's always better to prepare early, thus with seven months away from the 2009 Saipan Sportsfest, organizer Taga Inc. has already lined up several events from April 15 to 26.

Major events for the week-long fun and activity would be the XTERRA University (April 15); XTERRA Saipan Championship on April 18, 2009; Tagaman Triathlon on April 25, 2009, and simultaneously the Taga Kids Triathlon.

Taga Inc. president Wolf Mojica said there would also be clinics and socializing activities to spice-up the event, which is jointly sponsored by Pacific Islands Club, DFS Galleria Saipan, Coca-Cola, Subway, Glimpses of Saipan, Foremost, and Northwest Airlines. PTI has also provided hats and other support.

MARK RABAGO
The 2009 Saipan Sportsfest will be held from April 15 to 26. Photo above shows the start of the 2008 Tagaman at American Memorial Park's Micro Beach.

Government agencies are also major partners for the event that included Marianas Visitors Authority, Division of Parks and Recreation, Departments of Public Safety, and Public Health.

Mojica said they also rely heavily on volunteers to help with aid stations, directions for the participants and other duties.

The first who has registered is living in Japan.

Professional triathletes from around the world will be coming to Saipan not only to compete but will also to educate the young by sharing their experiences.

Mojica said registration could be made online at http://www.sainpansports.com.

Mojica said Christopher Flanagan would be competing for the Tagaman, the same event he competed last year.

The XTERRA Saipan Championship is a qualifier for the XTERRA World Championships to be held in Maui on Oct. 2009. There will be 34 qualifying slots to be awarded.

Representatives of Taga Inc. will be going to Maui in next month to observe and assist in the 2008 Maui event.

Saipan qualifiers for this yearís XTERRA Maui include Mieko Carey, Manny Sitchon and Ronald Villafria.

Carey earlier this week confirmed she is definitely competing while Sitchon begged off due to lack of financial resources.

The defending champions for both events have expressed willingness to come back.

Olympians who have competed previously did not make it this year because of the 2008 Beijing Summer Games.

Mojica is hoping that they will be coming back next year.

2009 Saipan Sportsfest Schedule

April 15-19	XTERRA Saipan Championship	
April 20	12pm	Tank to Tank Swim (Meet at Kilili Beach South)
	2pm	Bike Tour of Marpi
April 21	7pm	Pro Bike Clinic (Pacific Islands Club)
April 22	12pm	Tank to Tank Swim (Meet at Kilili Beach South)
	6pm.	Hash Run (Meet Beach South of PIC)
April 23	1pm	Best Ball Golf Tournament (Laolao Bay Golf Resort)
	6pm	Pro Swim Clinic (PIC Beach)
April 24	2009 Tagaman Triatlon	
	11:45am	Tank to Tank Swim (Meet at Kilili Beach South)

Jr. Nationals secure second straight win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Junior Nationals stepped on the gas early en route to a 72-60 victory against the Kontenders in the Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League Wednesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The win was the Junior Nationals' second in a row after losing their debut to the Southern Sonics last month, 71-4. The Junior Nationals' first win was against the G-Rollers II.

The loss was second straight for the Kontenders, who started the league with a 2-0 record, beating the G-Rollers II and the Suns. The G-Rollers I handed the Kontenders their first defeat.

Veterans Jericho Cruz and Marvin Rabauliman worked early for the Junior Nationals combining for 30 points to give their team a big 46-24 halftime lead.

With their huge lead, the Junior Nationals relaxed a bit, giving the Kontenders a chance to cut the margin to a decent one.

Rabauliman, who had 19 points in the first half, slowed down a bit in the second, but still managed to score eight markers. Cruz had 11 in the first half and added six in the last 20 minutes of the match.

Joseph White scored in double figures for the third straight game, nailing 10.

Trevor Ogumoro paced the Kontenders with 25 points. Eugene Dillay made eight of his 10 points in the second half, but he was too late the hero, as the Kontenders had put themselves in quite a deep hole in the first half.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The CNMI Junior Nationals' Allen Moses pulls up for a shot against a Southern Sonics defender during their opening game in the Rotary caging last month at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. The Junior Nationals lost to the Sonics, but won their next two games.

CNMI Junior Nationals 72 – Rabauliman 27, Crz 15, White 10, Moses 6, Castro 6, William 2, Villagomez 2.

Kontenders 60 – Ogumoro 26, E. Dillay 10, Kaipat 7, Dawe 5, Charley 3, D. Dillay 2, Nogis 2.

Scoring by halves: 46-24, 72-60.

Referees: Arnold Mesa and Connie Camacho.

PTI Voyagers, D'Pirates beat foes in Budweiser 8-Ball

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The PTI Voyagers and D'Pirates outshone their opponents to grab the lead in their respective divisions last Tuesday night in the ongoing Budweiser Open 8-Ball League.

Anchored by Jojo Talibong, Roman Rodriguez, Amor Zapata, Ryan Odicto, and Rolly Villanueva, the Voyagers scored a 3-1 win over Islander Rent A Car at Jonny's Bar.

The Voyagers compiled a total of 117 points (41-40-36) after three rounds as against the 106 (27-43-36) by Islander team of Boyet Sequioco, Don Antonio, Jomer Enriquez, Eric Caisip, and Rey Pinangay.

But most importantly, the Voyagers are now in the solo lead of the six-team field Agingan Division with a 10-2 record while dealing Islander its second defeat in 12 games for a 10-2 record in second place.

In the other games of the Agingan Division, third running Saipan Cell Hustlers outsmarted USSP Wat-Ever, 4-0, at the latter's home turf while Godfather's Rock Steady used its home advantage to defeat Coral Reef shark Attack, 3-1.

MARK RABAGO
Rolly Villanueva , shown here in a file photo, and PTI Voyagers improved to 10-2 in the Agingan Division of the Budweiser Open 8-Ball League after beating Islander Rent A Car, 3-1, at Jonny's Bar Tuesday night.

The Hustlers totaled 135 (46-47-42) points after three rounds while Wat-Ever had 123 (43-39-41).

The win was the Hustlers' eighth win in 12 starts while Wat-Ever further slipped to a 2-10 record in fifth place.

Godfather is in fourth with a 6-6 mark while Coral Reef is at the cellar with a 1-11 card.

In the Obyan Division, D'Pirates Huwa, which is powered by Ed Suzuki, Ray Basa, Ike Palacios, Ray Takai, and John Camacho, routed home team VFW Warriors, 4-0, to also take the lead with an 11-1 record.

D' Warriors racked-up a total of 143 (50-47-46) as they outshone the Warriors' team of Shila Muna, Winfred Camacho, Tawny Barewas, and Nhel Pagaduan, who managed with a 68 (20-27-21). The loss was the Warriors' seventh in 12 games.

The visiting team and second-running Primos Home Boys also won at the expense of host team Coral Reef Barracuda, 3-1, with total scores of 133 (39-47-47) and 116 (46-36-34).

The Home Boys are 10-2 while the Coral Reef has 4-8.

Krystal Perfect Spotters hosted USSP Fotten Palau and won via a 4-0 count.

The Perfect Spotters improved to a 5-7 card in third place while USSP further dropped to a 1-11 marking.

NMITF to hold first 'Leapfrog race' on Saipan

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Island Triathlon Federation will be holding for the first time a different kind of sport for mountain bikers, roadrunners, and road bikers.

This new style of bike and run event is called the "Leapfrog" race.

Organizers have already finalized the date and venue for introducing this new sport on Sept. 14, a Sunday, at Paupau Beach, where interested participants will start and finish the race.

Registration time will begin at 6am while the race will start at 6:30am with an entry fee of $10 for non-NMITF members and $5 for members. The projected average finishing time is one hour and five minutes (1:05.00) with a distance of about 8.5 miles.

There will be prizes to be given out courtesy of the following donors—Pacific Islands Club, BankPacific, Dr. Irma Halaby, Hardt Eye Clinic, Dr. Edgar Tudor, Romy's Bike Shop, Saipan Cellular Communications, Marianas Eye Institute, and the Law Offices of Eric Smith.

The race is a two-person team using one bicycle, each alternating the bike and run leg portion of the race. Everyone starts the race at the same time.

From the starting point, one teammate rides ahead and leaves the bike at a designated exchange point and begins running.

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Events lined-up for Saipan 2009 Sportsfest

Itís always better to prepare early, thus with seven months away from the 2009 Saipan Sportsfest, organizer Taga Inc. has already lined-up several events from April 15 to 26.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Serena beats Venus at US Open; Nadal reaches semi

So little to separate them over their careers, so little to separate them on this night.

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Anicia sets sights on Olympic dream

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI participating in Olympics may be a long shot, but having a CNMI-born athlete competing in the biggest sports spectacle in the world stands a chance with Anicia Santos aiming to join the U.S. Women's National Team.

Santos was born on Saipan and left the island with her family in 1999 when she was about to turn 10 years old. Her parents are Roque Santos and Dr. Christine Ebert-Santos who decided to move their family to the mainland to help Carlos, one of Anicia's four siblings, pursue his football dreams.

A fateful accident prevented Carlos from realizing his dreams.

But not Anicia, who from being a small kid playing various sports on Saipan's playgrounds, rose to become a member of the California Polytechnic State University (San Luis, Obispo) Women's Volleyball Team.

SPORTS TLIGHT

TheMustangs are in the NCAA Division I and is ranked No. 14 this season.

Before making it to the Mustangs' roster, the 6'1" player suited up for the U.S. Youth National Team and played in various tournaments in southeastern Europe in 2006.

"We played in tournaments in Slovenia and Serbia, and also had two international matches against the Slovenian and Croatian youth national teams. We won both games," the 19-year-old player said in an email to the *Saipan Tribune*.

"It was an amazing experience to be able to compete at that level and be surrounded by high caliber of athletes who were on my side as well as the opposite side of the net. "Coming from such a small island where I didn't imagine competitions getting any bigger or better than the SPG. I was completely shocked but honored when I received the invitation, as I was not only able to be a part of the

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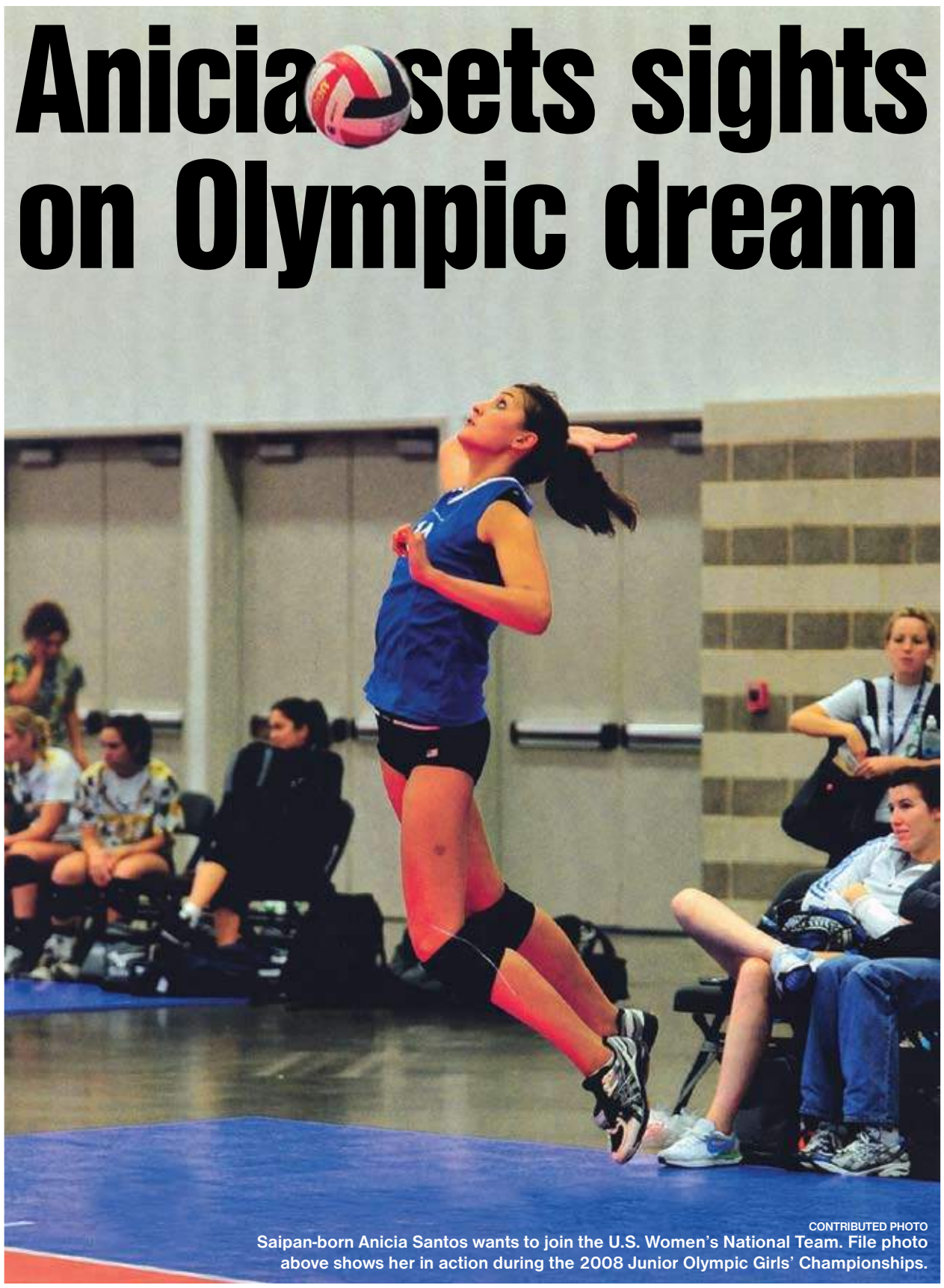

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan-born Anicia Santos wants to join the U.S. Women's National Team. File photo above shows her in action during the 2008 Junior Olympic Girls' Championships.

NMC claims PTI caging pennant

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
NMC's Mark Wallace goes up for a layup during their game against Autonomous in the PTI caging Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. The match was suspended due to a power outage, but the win was awarded to NMC as Autonomous had only four players for the continuation of the game Wednesday night.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The pennant championship in the Inaugural PTI Inter-Government/Business Basketball League was handed on a silver platter to Northern Marianas College, as it won its last two games at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium Wednesday night via forfeits.

NMC needed to sweep the last two

See NMC on Page 42

Minor

Heo pitted against seeded foe in Japan

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI's Ji Hoon Heo had a tough opening assignment in the Hyogo International Junior Tournament 2, as he squared off with boys' singles No. 5 seed Shoki Hachiya.

Heo and Hachiya collided in the first round of the 16-player draw singles competition, but results of the match were unavailable at press time.

Hachiya is only 15 years old and is currently ranked No. 600 in the world. His highest rank was at No. 548. This year, he has a 9-8 record in singles and 12-8 in doubles. The right-handed Japanese holds a ca-

See HEO on Page 42

Thea ready, raring to play in New Caledonia

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI junior netter Thea Minor will leave Fiji for New Caledonia this weekend to participate in a training camp and tournament in We Lifou in the Provincial Islands of the French territory.

In an email to the Saipan Tribune, Thea through her mother Joy, said she is expecting to meet tough foes in New Caledonia, but she had been practicing hard in Fiji in the past two weeks to withstand the pressure in her next tournament.

Minor is among the six junior tennis players in the Pacific who will be playing in Ligue Caledonienne de Tennis' the

See THEA on Page 42

Heo